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Hafa Adai!

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FOR ALLEGED ABUSE OF AUTHORITY

Commerce chief under investigation

By DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

Department of Commerce Secretary Mark Rabauliman is under investigation by the Office of Personnel Management over personnel grievances filed by an enforcement officer under his department regarding statements Rabauliman allegedly made during the Tinian Pika Festival last month.

Rabauliman

Mariano Salas, an enforcement officer under Commerce's Alcohol Beverage and Tobacco Control Division, alleges harassment, bullying, racial discrimination, and abuse of authority, in an incident report written last month.

The report essentially claims that Rabauliman demanded that Salas and other Commerce staff volunteering on Tinian use their per diem to buy cases of beer, using expletives, and allegedly making racial remarks against Salas, who is Chamorro.

"This is an ongoing matter and we know that an incident report has been filed at the Office of Personnel Management regarding this subject grievance," said Office of the Governor spokesman Ivan Blanco yesterday.

Rabauliman is a member of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' Cabinet.

"The administration will allow the lawful process in place to do its work and make a determination of whether further action is warranted," Blanco added. "We cannot provide further comment at this time."

Rabauliman, for his part, said he does not have any comment since the matter is still under review."… We'll just let the process go through, and I will be awaiting what's the outcome," he said, when contacted over the phone yesterday.

See COMMERCE on Page 4

M/V *Luta* welcomed by public and private sector on Saipan

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
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REPORTER

Government officials and members of the private sector welcomed the M/V *Luta* at the Port of Saipan yesterday.

A short ceremony was held in honor of the ship's arrival in her first trip from Rota to Saipan, which was said to take only four hours.

It was followed by an open house, which allowed members of the public to see the long-awaited ship that would soon carry cargo and passengers to the islands of the Commonwealth as well as to Guam.

In their speech, government officials took note of the opportunities that M/V *Luta* brings to the CNMI's table and congratulated

See M/V *LUTA* on Page 4

Cargo boat needs to hurdle more requirements to carry passengers

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
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REPORTER

While the M/V *Luta* has arrived and is visiting for the first time the islands of the Commonwealth, it is not yet clear when she will start her operations to transport cargo and passengers.

See REQUIREMENTS on Page 4

FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON

M/V *Luta*, a 150-foot long, 500-ton cargo ship that will serve the CNMI and Guam, arrived on Saipan for the first time yesterday. Members of the private and public sector were allowed to aboard the ship during the open house.

INSIDE

LOCAL
NMTI and NAP recently finalized the details associated with providing classes for NAP recipients.

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OVERDRIVE
Say "Dodge Charger" to most motorists, and no doubt they'll think of a police cruiser staked out in the weeds alongside a freeway.

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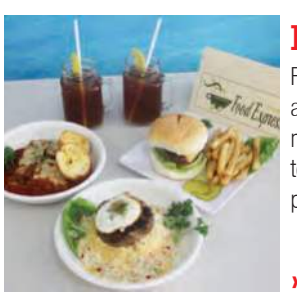

LIFE & STYLE
Food for the person who is always on the go is the target market that the management team behind Saipan Food Express wants to reach.

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Local

OPA probes Tinian firefighters' free OT hours as bonus, gift

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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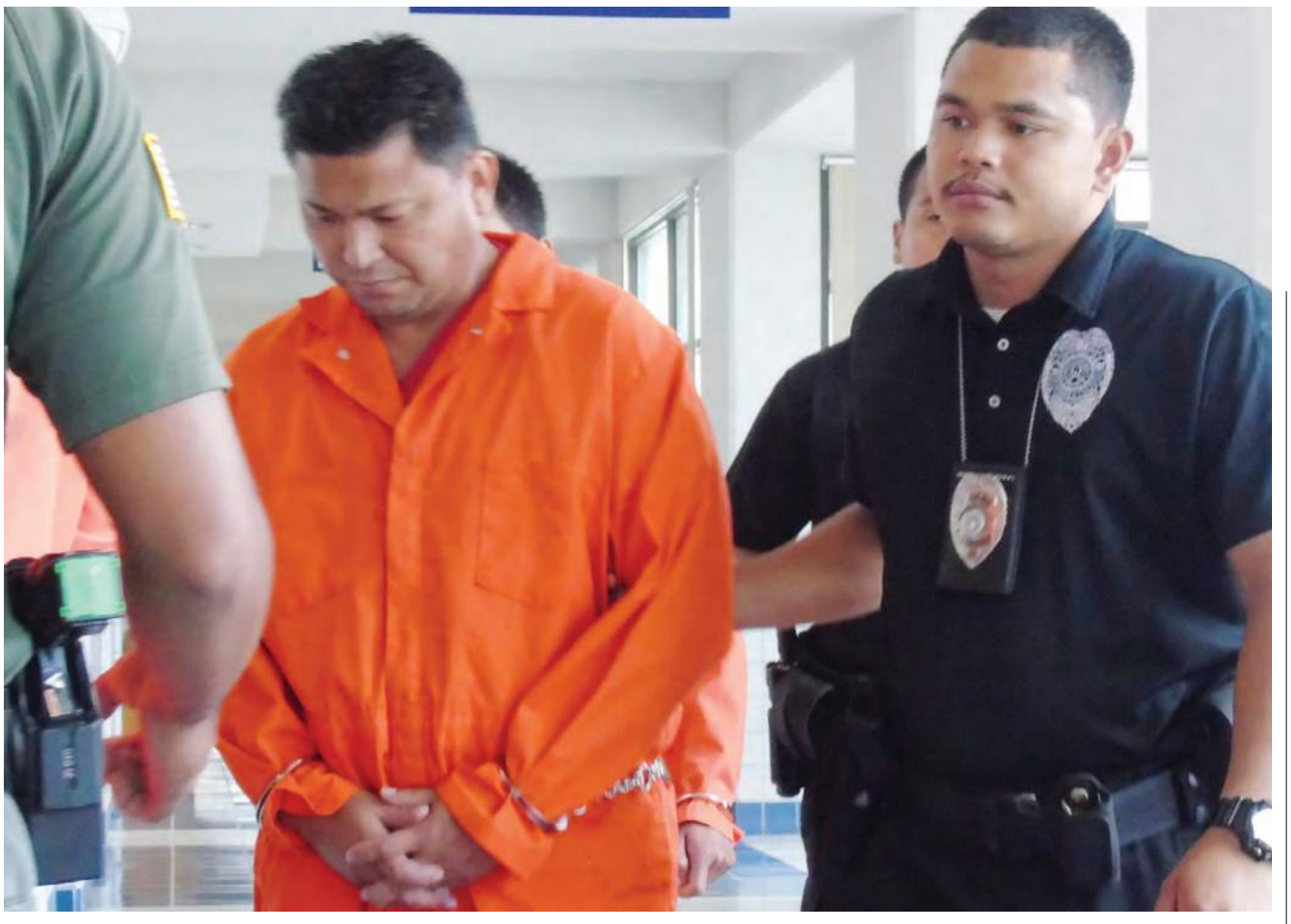
REPORTER



FERDIE DE LA TORRE

A Corrections officer leads Tinian Department of Fire and Emergency Management Services resident deputy commissioner Ignacio SN. Kiyoshi Jr. to a courtroom in the Superior Court for bail hearing yesterday on corruption charges.

Tinian Department of Fire and Emergency Management Services resident deputy commissioner Ignacio SN. Kiyoshi Jr. and Tinian Firefighter 1 Joseph Rudy Santos were arrested over the weekend for allegedly engaging in a conspiracy to give the island's firefighters free overtime hours as a gift or bonus for last year's holidays using false justification.

According to the investigation conducted by the Office of the Public Auditor, it was Kiyoshi who allegedly initiated the plan and ordered his firefighters to be engaged in the criminal conspiracy to defraud the CNMI government of over $17,000.

In a statement, Tinian Mayor Joey San Nicolas said effective immediately he is placing Kiyoshi on administrative leave for 15 days to allow for his office to fully assess the situation.

Thereafter, San Nicolas said, he will be making a decision based on the facts that he has gathered, on the next required course of action.

As mayor of Tinian and Aguiguan, San Nicolas said it is his duty to ensure that those entrusted with the delivery of public administration do so in conformance with the law, and with the highest degree of ethical standards.

"I expect those, whom I am appointed to serve as members of my Cabinet, to adhere to these standards and to ensure that we maintain the public's utmost trust and confidence," he said.

The mayor said as to the complaint leading to the warrant for the arrest, he cannot comment until he has been fully informed of the facts.

San Nicolas said the law provides that any person accused of a crime, is innocent until proven guilty in the court of law.

"What I can say at this point is that I will not tolerate any conduct, especially from members of my cabinet, which undermines the public's trust and confidence in our ability to effectively and efficiently administer public programs and services," he said.

OPA investigators served the arrest warrant to Kiyoshi at Tinian airport on Friday at 12:23pm and to Santos in San Jose, Tinian on Friday at 1:58pm.

Kiyoshi, 39, and Santos, 54, were taken to Superior Court yesterday morning for bail hearing on charges of conspiracy, theft, theft of service, and misconduct in public office.

Associate Judge David A. Wiseman reduced the $50,000 cash bail each initially imposed on the defendants, to $1,000 cash and $5,850 in unsecured bond.

Kiyoshi and Santos posted bail after the hearing.

Arraignment will be at Tinian courthouse on April 8, 2016 at 9am.

Former chief prosecutor Brian Flaherty appeared as counsel for Kiyoshi only for the bail hearing. Assistant public defender Cindy Nesbit was appointed as counsel for Santos.

Assistant attorney general Betsy Weintraub, counsel for the government, recommended to keep the $50,000 cash bail.

Weintraub also noted that Santos has a prior criminal conviction in 2005 over an assault with a dangerous weapon and disturbing the peace incident

OPA investigator Melissa H. Bauleong stated in her report that their investigation started when she received a call last Dec. 29 from a firefighter, who disclosed that Kiyoshi abused his position by giving overtime hours to all Tinian firefighters when in fact the overtime hours were never performed.

Bauleung said that last Jan. 31, she met with DFEMS Training coordinator Paul Sasamoto, who confirmed that all trainings on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota must be coordinated and arranged with his office either for certifications, in-house or refresher course to ensure compliance and requirements of their fields.

» Tinian DFEMS deputy commissioner, shift supervisor arrested

Bauleung said she showed to Sasamoto a copy of the request and authorization form reflecting the justification by Tinian DFEMS firefighters.

She said Sasamoto confirmed that the trainings for November and December 2015 as indicated in the form never came to his office.

Sasamoto also stated that Tinian DFEMS did not make any requests, arrangements, or coordinate with him to acknowledge and record the subject hours so it can be sanctioned and recorded in their files.

Bauleong said she and the OPA chief investigator met last Feb. 1 with Department of Public Safety resident director Juan E. Santos, who disclosed that sometime in November or December 2015, his personnel were asking to be transferred to DFEMS because they were making or earning more overtime hours when DFEMS hardly responds to any emergency calls.

Bauleong said that last Feb. 1, a DPS timekeeper stated that when DFEMS separated from DPS, firefighters started handwriting their time, specifically overtime hours.

Bauleong said she and the OPA chief investigator interviewed last Feb. 19, two Tinian firefighters, who disclosed that all the overtime hours that they and other firefighters accumulated between Thanksgiving and Christmas in 2015 or "pay periods 25 and 26" were not justified and that no work was performed.

The OPA investigator said a DFEMS shift supervisor disclosed that Kiyoshi gave him instructions to add 30 hours of overtime for him and 50 hours for his subordinates.

The shift supervisor apparently advised his personnel under his shift about what Kiyoshi's proposal of giving his personnel 50 hours of free overtime.

The shift supervisor said according to Kiyoshi, all they need to do is come up with a justification on their timecards and also on the request and authorization form and that each shift supervisor will sign it off and Kiyoshi will just approve it.

Bauleong said she and the OPA chief investigator interviewed last Feb. 29 seven other Tinian firefighters, who all agreed that they performed overtime work and that the justification that was handwritten on their timecards were true and accurate.

Bauleong said that on the same day, Feb. 29, during an interview, Santos, who was shift supervisor, admitted he was the one who manually or handwritten all the overtime justification hours on each of the personnel under his shift.

Santos denied the allegations and claimed that he worked all the hours showing on his timecards.

Bauleung said that, last March 4, one of the firefighters who was interviewed earlier, apologized to the OPA chief investigator for lying about the overtime issue.

Bauleong said the firefighter admitted that he received 50 hours of overtime for "pay periods 25 and 26."

The OPA investigator said the firefighter confessed that it all started with a command staff meeting when Kiyoshi laid out his plans about giving the firefighters 50 hours of free overtime hours and how to justify the hours.

The firefighter said that the overtime hours that he received were their holiday gifts from Kiyoshi.

Bauleong said five other firefighters came forward that same day and apologized for their previous untruthful statements about the overtime issue.

Bauleong said the five firefighters disclosed that they made up the hours just to match the 50 hours so that they can get paid for it.

She said the five firefighters admitted that these overtime hours were given to them by Kiyoshi as a form of gift or bonus for the holidays.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

'Hairspray' auditions extended

Friends of the Arts has extended auditions for 'Hairspray" until the show is fully cast.

FOA needs about four more adults and six more students to complete the cast. All should come prepared to sing as well as read for the audition.

If you are interested in being in one of the most high-energy Broadway shows to ever hit the stage, then contact MariLou or leave a message at 256-9540. Performances are scheduled for mid-to-late May. ***(PR)***

Transfer station, landfill open on March 24, closed on March 25

The Lower Base Transfer Station and the Marpi Landfill waste disposal facilities will be opened on Commonwealth Covenant Day, Thursday, March 24, 2016. However, in observance of Good Friday, March 25, 2016, both facilities will be closed all day. ***(PR)***

Navy to conduct training at W-517

ASAN, Guam—The Navy will conduct training at Warning Area 517 during the following dates and times:

- March 21-22 from 8am to 6:30pm
- March 23-24 from 8am to 11:55pm

The general public—especially fishermen, commercial pilots, and marine tour operators— are advised to stay clear of the area during the dates and times indicated.

W-517 is activated south of latitude 12° 40' 00"N. All vessels are advised to remain clear of W-517 south of latitude 12° 40' 00"N. Santa Rosa Reef and Galvez Bank are open for public use. W-517 is an irregular shaped polygon comprising of 14,000 nautical square miles of airspace that begins south of Guam and extends south-southwest in international waters. W-517 supports surface and aerial gunnery, missiles, and laser exercises.

For more information, contact the Joint Region Marianas Public Affairs Office at (671) 349-4055/3209. ***(PR)***

LibDay Royal Court has record number of candidates

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The 2016 Miss CNMI Liberation Day Royal Court made history with a record number of 29 candidates representing Saipan, Tinian, Rota, and the Northern Islands vying for the five crowns at stake in this year's competition, including the coveted Royal Queen title.

Twenty-seven of the 29 candidates were present in last night's pinning ceremony, which also marked as their formal introduction to the community, held at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center in Susupe.

Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang, Sen. Jude Hofschneider (R-Tinian), special assistant to the Saipan Mayor Henry Hofschneider, CNMI Board of Education vice chair Tany R. King, Liberation Day Royal Court chair Rose Hocog, 2016 Liberation Day committee chair Chris Leon Guerrero, Liberation Day nonprofit group head Louis Rogers, Skywalker Group staff led by program manager Sophia Alvarez, and Lynette Villagomez—who represented Education Commissioner Dr. Rita A. Sablan—graced yesterday's event.

Hocog said from now on she will be the one in charge of all the activities of the 29 candidates from the coronation night to the end of their reign as Royal Queen. "I thank all the parents who will entrust to me the care of their kids. This is just the start of a long road ahead of you."

"This is the first time in history that a lot showed interest in joining the Liberation Day Royal Court and also the first time that Saipan, Tinian, Rota, and the Northern Islands are all represented. Ladies, I congratulate you all," added Hocog.

Apatang, in his speech, reminded everyone present about the meaning of the 71st anniversary celebration of the Liberation of the people of Saipan from the "horrific conflict that caused so much pain to many in the 1940s."

"This evening's pinning ceremony of the Royal Court [candidates] wakes up the mighty spirit that lives deep in each one of us as we begin the preparations to honor those who engaged in the greatest sacrifice to liberate the people of Saipan and forever preserve our freedom," he added.

Apatang then thanked all candidates for joining, and their family and friends for all the support. "I want you to know that you will be role models for others as they aspire to one day join the competition."

JON PEREZ
Twenty-seven of the 29 candidates for the 2016 Miss CNMI Liberation Day Royal Court were presented to the community in last night's Pinning Ceremony held at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-purpose Center in Susupe.

Rogers, on the other hand, said that it was rewarding to see the interest shown by the 29 who joined this year. "We're going to make sure that this year's event would be absolutely wonderful."

Skywalker managing director Dr. Hu Bo said, in a letter read by Alvarez, that participating alone is a journey of self-discovery to the 29 candidates. "A journey that is crucial for young women like you to blossom to become strong and independent who will not only serve as role models but who will represent the new ear of [female] leaders."

Liberation committee chair Guerrero also thanked all the 29 candidates as they become volunteers for a good cause. "Tonight is the end of one thing and the beginning of another. Everything will be different after the event as you take the huge responsibility in our community."

Candidates Anbeata C. Maratita, Beda G. Mundo, Byanna Marie B. Lizama, Catherine A. Reyes, Cathy K. Amandus, Christine Roque, Christylynn Hope M. Del Rosario, Cornessa M. Dela Cruz, Coryn A. Achas, Dora E. Rabauliman, Jamila P. Alegre, Jasmine R. Umbay, Jennifer R. Camacho, Jerika Jersica P. Sekool; Karee Lu Matagolai, Kaylanie Santos, Lordina Gineanne H. Pangelinan, Lucy Mira M. Saito, Makaly R. Smith, Malena Hofschneider, Mardee-Ann M. Hermosilla, Mercilia Jesnett V. Teigita, Nelly Rose E. Saturno. Nikela T. Masayos, Norlyn P. Elayda, Shanthia Nicole Espinosa, and Sheela Marie K. Saraff were present in yesterday's pinning ceremony.

Malia Fatima T. Passi and Wendy A. Nicholas were also candidates but failed to attend yesterday's event.

The coronation night for the fundraising event, where the candidate who sells the most number of tickets wins, is set on July 1 with the venue to be announced at a latter time.

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Mazda3 Sedan or Hatchback total price is $19,995 less 20% down payment. Financed at 5.9% APR for 60 monthly payments of $308.50 or $142 per paycheck based on 26 pay periods per year. Total deferred price is $18,510.00.

Lack of skilled labor hampers Soudelor house repairs

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Lack of a skilled and volunteer workforce that would help rebuild houses wiped out by Typhoon Soudelor is slowing down the process being done by the Commonwealth Advocacy for Recovery Efforts.

CARE would again discuss that and other important issues in today's meeting at 2pm at the Governor's Office's conference room in Capital Hill.

There are about 130 families that need total rebuild as their houses were leveled by Soudelor's tornado-like winds. Based on the data collected by the American Red Cross' International Disaster and Crisis Management team, the villages of Kagman and Dandan have the highest percentage of homes that need total rebuilding with 14 and 12 percent, respectively.

CARE director Jenny Hegland said they are hoping to build typhoon-resilient homes for these families. "We want to help them build stronger homes and there are steps to be taken so we could make this a reality."

However, they are faced with lack of a skilled workforce as construction laborers would rather go work for contractors that have big projects being built on Saipan.

Hegland said one solution that they are looking at is to bring in outside laborers especially from groups like the Mennonite Disaster Services, World Renew, and AmeriCorps VISTA.

The MDS, a non-profit group, alone has a network of more than 3,000 skilled volunteers whose primary focus is rebuilding homes in areas or countries affected by disasters.

CARE's main concern is bringing in members of the said volunteer groups to help in the rebuilding process of all the totally damaged homes, since it would take additional funds for their trip.

That's why Hegland, when they met with members of the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation early this month, has asked SNILD for $250,000 to make sure CARE could tap the services of the three non-profit organizations.

CARE president Alex Sablan, during their meeting with SNILD, said the unmet housing needs for the typhoon victims is still significant. "Too many Saipan families still have home repair needs or need to completely rebuild their homes."

He added that these families have either received aid from the Federal Emergency Management Agency or did not qualify to receive such funds. "[They] cannot meet the expense of rebuilding a safe, sanitary, and functional home on their own."

CARE is looking at a 22-month period in completing all total rebuild housing projects once they bring in the skilled labor to the island. Hegland said CARE is looking at all available options in bringing in the said volunteer groups.

COMMERCE

From Page 1

According to the report, on Feb. 12, Commerce ABTC director David Maratita, asked for volunteers for the Tinian Pika Fesitaval and that Salas, along with several others, volunteered.

Upon their arrival on Tinian that night, the report states that the group were greeted by Commerce resident director Mary Susan Cruz, who informed the group that they would be hosted for dinner that evening at the residence of a Ms. Charlene Lizama and that a Mr. Steven King would arrive and transport them to the residence.

Salas said King arrived to bring them to Lizama's residence for dinner, and that after dinner, the group asked if they could be taken to Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino to secure their living quarters, to which King agreed to drive them to the hotel.

Salas said as they waited for King in the parking lot, Rabauliman approached the four of them and demanded that each of them buy two cases of beer with their per diem.

Salas' report goes on allege that Rabauliman used expletives to get the four to buy the cases of beer to "show your appreciation to our host here on Tinian."

The report alleges that Rabauliman asked Salas for $10 on top of the two cases of beer that Rabauliman purportedly demanded them to buy.

"Guys don't make me look bad here now," Salas writes, quoting Rabauliman.

King drove the group to a store to buy the beer, when Rabauliman allegedly called Salas on his personal phone to again demand that they buy two cases of beer each with their per diem, according to the report.

King advised the volunteers to buy a 12-pack of beer each since "you guys don't have much per diem and anyways there is a lot of beers in the cooler already," to which the staff agreed.

According to the report, the staff bought the beer and were driven to Tinian Dynasty to change their attire and were picked up by King half an hour later and brought back to the host's residence, where Salas said Rabauliman continued the alleged harassment.

"At this point it was clear that the Secretary was quite intoxicated. He challenged me to down a can of beer so that I may be welcomed to the gang. At the first, I thought the gang meant the Dept. of Commerce gang being I am fairly new to the agency going 6 months into the job. But the gang he was referring to was the Carolinian Gang," Salas writes.

Salas goes on to claim that Rabauliman repeatedly told him that he was going to fire him.

Rabauliman, Salas also said, told him seven times, using expletives, to "listen to me 'cause I'm the boss."

Salas said this incident was a continuous abuse of authority within the office that needed to be stopped. "I have experienced in the workplace whenever I'm around Mark Rabauliman, he would on numerous occasions use racial comments demoralizing Chamorros, like 'Lanyhamzuna Chamorro.'"

"To demand your staff to use their per diem to purchase beer is clearly unethical and clearly an abuse of authority," Salas said in his report, where he asked for "corrective action" and said his rights and protection as a civil service employee had been violated.

"I was harassed, threatened, bullied and racially discriminated by [being] spoken to with profanity throughout the night, I was threatened to be fired repeatedly, racially discriminated as a Chamorro and forced to use my per diem to purchase beer by my superior the Secretary of Commerce, Mark Rabauliman," said Salas.

M/V *LUTA*

From Page 1

the owners of the ship as well as Rota residents on the arrival of M/V *Luta*.

"We have a vessel now that we can transport the heavy equipment to assist other projects or disaster, we can easily mobile this kind of equipment and not just equipment but also tools, materials," Gov. Ralph DLG Torres said.

"This MV *Luta*, just imagine on the island of Rota, we have a family who dedicated their resources and their time, and now we have vessel that can service Rota, Saipan, Tinian, Guam, and also our Northern Islands. This is a great opportunity for all of us, tourism, private sector, our residents, now we can start literally thinking about settlement up north because it's feasible, and it's here," he added.

Senate President Francisco M. Borja (Ind-Tinian) also congratulated the Mendiola family for finally coming with MV *Luta* to service the CNMI and its positive effect to the economy.

The Mendiolas, including Abelina Mendiola, are the owners of Luta Mermaid LLC, which owns M/V *Luta*.

"I guess by providing this infrastructure, it will give the people of the CNMI more opportunities to invest on Rota, Tinian, and elsewhere in the Commonwealth and this will also bring the prices of the commodities to a reasonable price," Borja said.

"I'm looking at the *Luta* and I'm reminded by the saying, by geographical location, our remoteness, our challenge is always being divided by water. The MV *Luta* behind us breaks down that barrier, but opens the gateway to opportunities to Saipan, Tinian, Rota, and even Guam," Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation floor leader Rep. Angel Demapan (R-Saipan) said.

He also recognized Lt. Gov. Victor Hocog for being instrumental in bringing M/V *Luta* to the Commonwealth.

"It took a while, but they worked tirelessly to make sure that it happens," Demapan said.

Hocog, in his remarks, addressed the critics regarding M/V *Luta*.

"Many have been said and maybe none of you doubted, but substantial criticism has come upon me and the Rota delegation to see as a Rota delegate, what the island really needs to enhance the service to the people of Rota and to enhance the economic reliability of the Commonwealth," Hocog said.

"To those people who did not believe that M/V *Luta* will not materialize, I ask you to come forward now and join the open house for your own eyes and your own satisfaction so that you would have something better to talk about," he added.

Mendiola thanked the people for the opportunity to showcase M/V *Luta* to Saipan and thanked those who attended.

Aside from cabinet officials, directors of different boards, department heads, and leaders of businesses, some residents also took time to check out the ship.

"It is such a hard work and we're just happy that we're here," Mendiola said.

M/V *Luta* will also visit Tinian this week after Saipan.

Maratita pens bill to remove mandatory ID check in buying tobacco, alcohol

Rep. Glenn L. Maratita (Ind-Tinian) has authored a bill this month to remove requirements that a person present his or her ID before buying an alcoholic beverage or a tobacco product.

House Bill 19-141, instead, amends current law so that sellers must exercise "prudent judgment," and will not sell alcohol or tobacco without first demanding from a person "who obviously appears to be below 27 years of age" to present an valid ID of CNMI, U.S., or foreign governments showing them to be 21 years or older.

Further, the bill allows sellers to exercise prudent judgment so that they "may not reprise the demand" for a valid ID from the same person whose ID had been verified prior.

"As a result of the enforcement of the mandatory ID card requirement prior to selling any alcoholic beverage and tobacco products at the off-sale and on-sale licensed establishments," the bill states, "there exist growing complaints in the community, specifically, from senior citizens and visiting tourists, as well as a growing adverse communication reaction with respect to the absurdness in demanding for a valid ID card on a daily basis from the same patron."

The bill allows sellers to document the persons of legal age "in a ledger" who the seller is responsible for updating to make sure IDs are not expired. The ledger must be provided to a visiting Alcohol Beverage and Tobacco Control inspector during inspection and compliance rounds. ***(Dennis B. Chan)***

REQUIREMENTS

From Page 1

Asked when the ship will start operations, owner Abelina Mendiola said they are still waiting for another inspection.

"We're waiting on a [U.S.] Coast Guard inspection out of Guam," Mendiola said.

It is not yet clear also who will be the ship's agent.

According to Commonwealth Ports Authority executive director MaryAnn Lizama, there are another aspect of requirements based on federal regulations for M/V *Luta* to bring passengers and that Luta Mermaid LLC will still need to look into it.

"For passengers, I know that there is another aspect of requirements based on the U.S Coast Guard regulations. That's something that the owners and the operators will have to look into," Lizama said.

CPA is not yet into discussion regarding passengers

"Until such time that their permits are set, then we'll be able to work with the owners as well as vessel cabin and crew," Lizama said.

For cargo, on the other hand, M/V *Luta* is ready, according to Lizama. The port on Rota, where the ship will be home-ported is also all set.

"Cargo, yes we're pretty much ready for the cargo aspect. We were there in Rota; we were able to see her dock side. There are some cosmetic, structural things that we need to do at the port and that's pretty much for every vessel that calls port to Rota," Lizama said.

Lt. Gov. Victor Hocog has mentioned that certifications and regulations from various agencies had to be secured and followed, thus causing delays to the ship's arrival.

For one, he said a boom crane as well as the boom crane mount had to be ordered from two separate states so as to satisfy specifications.

M/V *Luta* was also mandated to have a rescue boat.

"There's a lot of going around to ensure that they meet the necessary specification," Hocog said.

"It's not an easy task to meet especially when M/V *Luta* is supposed to carry passengers. They have to strip again all of what is in there already that has been done and meet the requirements of the Coast Guard to ensure that when carrying passengers, their safety is foremost," he added.

The M/V *Luta* was said to be able to carry about 20 passengers and 30 20-foot cargo containers.

IN 2013 FATAL CRASH ON TINIAN

Owners of Piper plane settle 2 survivors' lawsuit for $300K

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The owners of a Piper aircraft that crashed on Tinian in October 2013, killing three persons and injuring four others, have settled the lawsuit filed by two of the four survivors for $300,000.

The parties' counsels Timothy H. Bellas and Colin M. Thompson filed on Friday a stipulated motion, asking the U.S. District Court for the NMI to approve their settlement.

Bellas is counsel for the defendants Star Marianas Air Inc. and Tinian Transportation Management Solutions Inc., while Thompson is counsel for Lisha Gu and Gu's minor daughter, Yuxin Wu.

Gu and Wu were among the four survivors in the crash. Gu's husband and Wu's father, Xuan Wu, was among the three passengers killed in that crash.

Pilot Luis Silva and a Chinese female tourist were the two other fatalities.

Lisha Gu and the child are currently residing in Shanghai, China.

According to Bellas and Thompson, Star Marianas Air maintained liability insurance, which covered the injuries suffered by the minor child and decedent, with maximum coverage of $300,000 per person.

Bellas and Thompson said the parties have negotiated a settlement of all claims between the parties and this has resulted in the execution of a confidential settlement agreement.

Bellas and Thompson asked the court to find that the amount of the settlement is reasonable and allow Lisha Gu to sign the settlement agreement on behalf of the minor.

The lawyers said the settlement amount of $300,000, less attorney's fees and advanced costs, is to be deposited into a trust account in China, with the child as he named beneficiary and Lisha Gu as the trustee.

The lawyers said the trust shall be used for the support and education of the minor until she turns 18 years of age.

Once the court approves the settlement, the parties will file a motion to dismiss the lawsuit.

Gu and the child sued Tinian Transportation Management Solutions Inc., Star Marianas Air Inc., the plane's pilot Silva, and 10 unnamed co-defendants, for negligence-wrongful death, negligence, loss of consortium, and negligent infliction of emotional distress.

The plaintiffs asked the court to hold the defendants liable to pay them in unspecified amount of damages, court costs, and attorney's fees.

Thompson stated in the complaint that on Oct. 6, 2013 at 2:51am, a Piper Aircraft piloted by Silva crashed three miles north of the Tinian International Airport on Tinian, completely destroying the plane.

As a result of the impact, Xuan was killed and plaintiffs Gu and Wu suffered severe and debilitating personal injury.

Thompson said prior to the crash, the Saipan-bound aircraft descended to an altitude of 302 feet, turned 180 degrees, and collided with a jungle-covered hill at an elevation of 450 feet.

Thompson said the last radio communication with Silva involved him asking traffic control for weather condition information.

Thompson said prior to Oct. 6, 2013, defendants had knowledge of other air crashes involving their aircraft, including a Nov. 19, 2012 crash involving defendants' Piper 32-300 and a pilot flying between Saipan and Tinian, which caused death and serious personal injury.

In the Nov. 19 crash, one person was killed and six others were injured. The six survivors, all Chinese nationals, also filed a wrongful death lawsuit in federal court against the pilot, Jae Choi, Star Marianas Air Inc., Marianas Air Travel, Tinian Transportation Management Solutions Inc., Tianing Travel Agency, Top Development Inc., and 100 unnamed co-defendants.

Ogumoro's new counsel requests to continue sentencing

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Attorney Daniel T. Guidotti, the new counsel for former Department of Public Safety deputy commissioner Ambrosio T. Ogumoro in his corruption case, yesterday requested the Superior Court to continue the sentencing for one week in order for him to adequately prepare for the hearing.

Ogumoro's sentencing was set for tomorrow, Wednesday, at 1:30pm. Guidotti requested the court to reset the sentencing to March 30 at 1:30pm.

In his declaration, Guidotti said he became Ogumoro's attorney of record on Friday after the court granted the defendant's request to substitute his attorney, Edward Arriola Sr.

Guidotti did not explain why there was a request to substitute Arriola.

Guidotti said he reviewed over the weekend Ogumoro's extensive file in preparation for the sentencing hearing.

The lawyer said based on discussions with his client, the size of the file, the nature, and public import of this sentencing, he needs to do additional factual and legal research in order to provide adequate legal representation.

Guidotti also requested the court to reset the sentencing memoranda deadline to Friday, March 25.

Guidotti said special prosecutor George L. Hasselback does not object to their request for continuance.

Last Jan. 26, Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman announced his verdict finding Ogumoro guilty of seven of nine corruption charges for his role in the shielding of then-Attorney General Edward Buckingham from being served with penal summons in August 2012.

Wiseman found Ogumoro guilty of five counts of misconduct in public office, one count of obstructing justice: Interference with a law enforcement officer or witness, and one count of criminal coercion.

The judge, however, dismissed with prejudice the charges of conspiracy to commit obstructing justice: Interference with a law enforcement officer or witness, and misconduct in public office.

Dismiss with prejudice means the government cannot re-file the charges anymore.

A Superior Court jury also rendered a unanimous verdict finding Ogumoro guilty of conspiracy to commit theft of services and theft of services pertaining to the same incident of shielding of Buckingham.

Ogumoro is the last defendant in this case.

Last Jan. 13, former Commonwealth Ports Authority police chief Jordan Kosam entered a guilty plea, while the charges against his co-defendant, former CPA police captain John T. Rebuenog, were dismissed.

Kosam pleaded guilty to one count of misconduct in public office. Superior Court Presiding Judge Robert C. Naraja sentenced Kosam to one-year imprisonment, but suspended the imposition of the sentence.

Naraja placed Kosam on three years of supervised release. Wiseman dismissed the charges against Rebuenog after Hasselback moved to drop the charges.

Former governor Benigno R. Fitial pleaded guilty, while Buckingham was convicted during a bench trial. Fitial and Buckingham did not serve prison term. The charges against Fitial's former personal driver and bodyguard Jermaine Joseph W. Nekaifes were dismissed.

‘Consumers must be protected from unfair telco billing practices’

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

As a result of consumer complaints expressed to his office, Sen. Sixto Igisomar (R-Saipan) has pre-filed a bill to regulate the billing practices of telecommunications companies.

Senate Bill 19-93 finds that these billing practices must be regulated so that consumers will be protected by “prohibiting unfair and deceptive practices” and establishing minimum standard for billing, late fees, and disconnection.

“This bill is essential to protecting our constituents who work hard for their money,” Igisomar said in an email. “We have to ensure that consumers are provided a clear understanding, both by representatives of the firms they are doing business with, but more importantly in writing, which the laymen can easily understand.”

“There needs to be clear and concise communication as to service billing, billing cycles, steps for dispute resolution, and appeals process, including clear time frames as to each step.

“As our economy continues to expand, it is essential that policies are put in place to ensure fair business practices that protect consumers to the greatest extent possible,” he added.

“My office has been working alongside the Attorney General’s Office to develop a comprehensive bill that meets this intent.”

The Senate bill, among others, mandates a “consumer bill of rights.”

It says telecommunications consumers have the right to accurate and understandable bills and to mechanisms for resolving disputes and correcting errors; the right to be charged only according to the rates and terms and conditions to which they have agreed; the right to reasonable payment terms; the right to fair treatment, the right to reasonable compensation for poor service quality and service interruptions, and the right to be free of improper discriminations in prices, terms, conditions, or offers, among other several other rights.

The mandates set forth by the bill may be enforced by the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission, the consumer counsel, or any affected customers.

‘YOU MATTER’ FORUM CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Students recently gathered for the Northern Marianas College’s first ever “You Matter” Forum where they were able to ask questions about a range of issues and find out about upcoming activities. The forum was hosted by the Associated Students of Northern Marianas College (ASNMC) and had Student Services dean Leo Pangelinan, Tinian Instructional Site coordinator Maria Aguon, School of Education director Charlotte Cepeda, and instructor Dean Papadopoulos in attendance.

Public’s help needed in looking for wild bee colonies

Chris Rosario, research associate with the Western Pacific Tropical Research Center at the University of Guam has been surveying bees in the Marianas Islands as part of the National Honey Bee survey funded by USDA-APHIS.

“Bees are not only important as pollinators, they are fascinating insects to study,” said Rosario. His interest in bees has prompted him to find ways to control the varroa mite discovered in Guam, Tinian, and Saipan.

“While conducting the honey bee health survey we found the presence of the varroa mite, Varroa destructor on Saipan bees. As the name suggests, this mite is detrimental to the health of bees on island and worldwide,” said Rosario

He needs the public to assist him in finding wild (feral) bee colonies, especially if they are causing a problem for neighborhoods or homeowners.

Those willing to assist can contact Christopher Rosario at the Wise Owl Animal Hospital: (671) 646-2273 or (671) 487-1640. He can also be reached at the University of Guam Western Pacific Tropical Research Center: (671)-735-2068. ***(PR)***

Party at restaurant ends with a fight between two friends

A businessman was arrested for allegedly throwing a glass on the face of his friend and beating him up during their drinking session at a restaurant in Gualo Rai early morning Saturday.

Kejin Hong, 53, was arrested for assault with a dangerous weapon, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace.

The alleged victim, Nan Kun Chen, was transported by medics to the Commonwealth Health Center due to a half-inch cut between his eyebrows, an inch-long scratch mark on the right cheek and left thumb, and an inch-long scrape on the left palm.

At a bail hearing yesterday, Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman imposed a bail of $650 cash and $5,850 in unsecured bond.

Arraignment will be on April 4 at 9am.

Assistant public defender Cindy Nesbit was appointed to serve as counsel for Hong. Assistant attorney general Betsy Weintraub appeared for the government.

Police Detective Therese S. Kintoki stated in her report that, on Saturday at 2:32am, a police officer responded to Oriental Dumpling House Restaurant in Gualo Rai, where a disturbance in progress was reported.

Upon arrival at the restaurant, the officer observed two men standing over the alleged victim, who was sitting on the floor and leaning against the wall.

The officer noticed that blood was dripping from the victim’s eyebrows. The officer also observed shattered glass and cans of beer on the floor.

The suspect, Hong, later came in from the back of the restaurant and told the officer that Chen was too much and that’s why he punched him.

Hong was then arrested.

Chen later told police that he attended a party for a friend’s month-old bay at Oriental Dumpling House Restaurant on Friday.

Chen and Hong were drinking along with three other friends. When they were about to take the last shots of their drink Saturday early morning, Hong allegedly spilled the beer and threw the glass cup on Chen’s face.

The cup fell and shattered on the floor. Chen asked Hong why he did that because in Chinese custom throwing a glass on the face is very bad and a disgrace.

Hong also punched Chen on the face, prompting the latter to fight back. The other friends stopped the fight.

Hong left the restaurant and later came back with his male employee. The employee was about to punch Chen, but stopped when Chen asked if he wants to be involved in the fight. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Let’s GO!

LOOKING FOR: UTV Mechanic

Become a part of Saipan’s most unique off-road experience team! Let’s Go Tour Company has an opening for a Full Time Mechanic in its Saipan base. We passionately serve people who enjoy the outdoor lifestyle by delivering innovation, quality and value in our products and service. At Let’s Go Tour Company you will meet new people every day while enjoying the spirit of adventure!

Position Overview:
This position is responsible for servicing, diagnosing, repairing and installing motors, parts, and general components of a “Utility Terrain Vehicle” (UTV).

Essential Job Functions:
Assures vehicles are repaired in a timely and accurate manner by performing the necessary diagnostics and trouble shooting, consulting with supervisor and manager when necessary. Moves vehicles around interior or exterior of the buildings. Assists in loading and unloading of passengers when needed. Assists in tour guide/driving functions when needed.

Requirements:
4+ years of experience in auto mechanics

Hiring preference is given to those with solid mechanical knowledge and at least 2 years of experience in the power sports (Motorcycles/ATV’s/UTV’s/Jetskis/Boats) industry.

Interested applicants may send their applications to hr_Int@tanholdings.com. Applications for Employment are available at the Human Resources Department located at the 2nd floor of the JP Center Building along Beach Road or at the Century Tours office at Kanoa Resort. Background checks and pre-employment drug testing will be required prior to employment.

COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY

REQUEST TO BID
ITB: ITB16-CHCC/MSO-001

SUBMISSION/OPENING DATE: April 11, 2016 **TIME: 9:00 AM**

TO PURCHASE 3 OF 5 PASSENGER, 4 DOOR SEDAN AND 3 OF 4X2 FULL SIZE PICK UP TRUCK

COPIES OF THE ITB PACKET MAY BE PICKED -UP AT CHCC PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY DIVISION-MEDICAL SUPPLY STORAGE FACILITY LOWER BASE SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSALS AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ STANLEY T. IAKOPO
CHCC DIRECTOR OF P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP NO.: RFP16-BECQ/DCRM-070

E-BID IS AUTHORIZED ON THIS RFP AND MUST BE SENT TO procurement@pticom.com NO LATER THAN 10:00 A.M., CHAMORRO STANDARD TIME, UTC +10 HOURS BY APRIL 06, 2016

“GARAPAN FIELD SURVEILLANCE PROJECT FOR THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND COASTAL QUALITY, DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT”

THE SCOPE OF WORK FOR THIS PROJECT WILL BE AVAILABLE ON OR AFTER **MARCH 08, 2016** AT THE BECQ OFFICE LOCATED AT THE GUALO RAI CENTER BUILDING, ON CHALAN PALE ARNOLD ROAD, SAIPAN OR ELECTRONICALLY BY E-MAIL REQUEST TO **k.graziano.becq@gmail.com** DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP MAY BE SUBMITTED BY FACSIMILE TO MS. KATIE GRAZIANO, (670) 664-8531 OR BY EMAIL AT k.graziano.becq@gmail.com NO LATER THAN THE **CLOSE OF BUSINESS, MARCH 29, 2016.** RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SHALL BE SHARED WILL ALL PROSPECTIVE PROPOSERS.

THE GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOPOSALS AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTION IN A PROPOSAL IF IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ FRANK M. RABAULIMAN
ADMINISTRATOR OF BECQ

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

Procurement And Supply
CNMI Government

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP NO.: RFP16-BECQ-067
Submission: April 12, 2016 Time: 10:00 A.M.

“TO PROVIDE TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION FOR THE BECQ ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM”

The Scope of Work for this project will be available on or after **March 08, 2016** at the BECQ office located at the Gualo Rai Center Building, on Chalan Pale Arnold Road, Saipan or electronically by e-mail request to **reinacamacho@becq.gov.mp** during regular working hours.

A pre-proposal meeting is scheduled for **March 28, 2016 at 9:00 a.m.** local time, in the 2nd Floor BECQ conference room.

Questions regarding this RFP may be submitted by facsimile to **Ms. Reina Camacho**, (670) 664-8540 or by email at **reinacamacho@becq.gov.mp** no later than the **close of business, April 01, 2016.** Responses to questions shall be shared with all prospective proposers.

The government reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive any imperfection in a proposal if in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All proposals shall become the property of the CNMI government.

/s/ FRANK M. RABAULIMAN
Administrator of BECQ

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director, P&S

‘No action’ alternative for areas outside Tanapag tank sites

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
frauleine_villanueva@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A “no action” alternative was considered by the U.S Army Corps of Engineers for their proposed plan for one of their projects involving the Tanapag Fuel Farm.

In a public meeting last Thursday, USACE-Honolulu District (POH) presented their proposed plan and the “no action” as their sole preferred alternative for the area outside of the actual tank area.

The said alternative would not implement a remedial technology or process to reduce or minimize the volume, toxicity, or mobility of chemicals of potential concerns or COPCs at the Tanapag Fuel Farm.

A supplemental remedial investigation done at the fuel farm in 2014 and 2015 addressed 13 above-ground storage tank sites in Tanapag and four AST sites in Sadog Tasi as well as three groundwater monitoring wells and samples were analyzed for total petroleum hydrocarbons as diesel, motor and gasoline oil, semi-volatile organic compounds, volatile organic compounds, and metals such as chromium and lead, among others.

POH’s report states that TPH exceeded its diesel and motor oil ESLs at Tanks 5C, 17, and 38 and several samples at AST sites 5C and 17 exceeded the Pacific Basin ESL for benzo(a)pyrene and dibenz(a,h)anthracene. However, their human health risk assessment reported that there are no risks to human health.

“The cancer risk from on-site COPC is within or below the acceptable risk management range of $1x10^{-4}$ to $1x10^{-6}$ at the above-ground storage tank sites, the total non-cancer hazard for al receptors is below the EPA hazard index of 1, and all soil metals exposure point concentrations are below applicable unrestricted-land-use Pacific Basin environmental screening levels,” POH said.

POH added that the alternative was screened against the U.S Environmental Protection Agency’s three primary evaluation criteria and that it should also satisfy the EPA modifying criteria for CNMI and community acceptance.

A comment period was opened to the public for the project which will last until April 16.

POH senior program and project manager Helene Takemoto clarified that there are two parts to their Tanapag Fuel Farm, which includes this Hazardouzs, Toxic, and Radioactive Waste Project, and the removal action project that was discussed last January.

“What this project is, it’s outside of the tank area and to see if it leaked elsewhere,”

We had to do it separately because of the way the funding for this program is. Underground-ground storage tanks and above-ground storage tanks, there are funds for that, and the contaminated soil for that, is another separate pot,” Takemoto said.

Another public meeting in April or May for the actual removal of the tanks will be held once the contractor presented their plan to USACE, according to Takemoto.

Once removed, samples will also be taken from the soil within the tank footprints and will be tested as well.

“The tanks, some of them sat on the concrete pad and the only way we can tell is we got to move the tank out, and then move the concrete pad, and then the contractor is supposed to sample to see if it meets with the criteria, the clean up goal and if it doesn’t, they have to take care of the soil,” Takemoto said.

The Tanapag Fuel Farm was built in the mid to late 1940s and was used by the U.S. Navy to provide fuel for ships and aircraft during World War II and through the 1950s, after which up to 42 tanks were abandoned.

In 2006, six tanks were removed from the same site by BECQ and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. About 17 tanks remain in the former fuel farm.

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Happy first birthday to Jermaine Barbo, who held the celebration of her special day at Shirley’s Coffee Shop Susupe last March 19.

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhc.gov.mp

INVITATION FOR BIDS
This ad is paid with HUD Funds by NMHC

NMHC IFB 2016-009
Building Maintenance of NMHC’s Housing Units in Saipan

Governor Ralph DLG Torres and Lt. Governor Victor Hocog, through the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors, are hereby giving notice that NMHC is soliciting sealed bids for the Building Maintenance of NMHC’s Housing Units in Saipan.

Interested individuals or firms may pick up a copy of the Project Package beginning Monday, March 21, 2016, at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, during regular working hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Monday thru Friday except CNMI holidays.

A Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference will be held at the NMHC Central Office on **Monday, April 4, 2016, at 9:00 a.m.**, at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan. Bidders will have the opportunity to tour the housing subdivisions and inspect several housing units owned by NMHC and the Central Office that will be covered under the proposed contract. Attendance at this conference and site visit are considered essential to the bidders’ understanding of the project elements and a company that does not have a representative in attendance at the pre-bid conference will be considered as a non-responsive bidder. Inquiries regarding this solicitation must be addressed in writing to the NMHC Corporate Director at P. O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950 no later than 9:00 a.m., Thursday, April 7, 2016.

Sealed bids must be marked **NMHC IFB 2016-009**. For bidders within the CNMI, one (1) original and three (3) copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Capitol Hill, Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950, not later than **10:00 a.m., local time Thursday, April 21, 2016.** Bids received after the date and time will not be accepted. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to bid. Notice of Intent to bid must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than 10:00 a.m., local time, April 21, 2016, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside the CNMI, one (1) original and three (3) copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than **April 21, 2016**, and must be received at Procurement and Supply no later than **April 28, 2016.** Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Capitol Hill, Saipan at **10:00 a.m., local time, April 29, 2016.** However, if no notice of intent to bid were received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at **10:30 a.m., local time on April 21, 2016.**

All labor on this project shall be paid no less than the minimum wage rate of $6.05 per hour which took effect on September 30, 2014 as established by Federal law including subsequent increases of $.50 per hour as announced by the U.S. Department of Labor and/or the CNMI Department of Labor, whichever is higher.

NMHC hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that in any contacts entered into pursuant to this advertisement, small business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit bids and will not be discriminated against on grounds of race, color, religion, sex, disabilities or national origin.

This project is also subject to Section 3 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1968 which requires the successful bidder to the “maximum extend feasible”, take affirmative steps to provide training, contracting and employment opportunities and help ensure that the economic opportunities generated by these HUD funds are provided to local low-income residents in the CNMI.

Bidding procedures shall be in compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, however, Article 7, “Local Business Preference”, as amended by Public Law 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118, is not available to local bidders in this procurement because its use is prohibited by the Federal law granting the funding for this project.

The bidder submitting the lowest responsible bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations Section NMIAC 70-30.3-245. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsible bid will be awarded a contract with NMHC.

The Commonwealth Government reserves the right to reject any and all bids for any reason and to waive any defects in the bids if determined by the government to be in its best interest. All bids shall become the property of the Commonwealth Government.

For information, call Ms. Jocelyn C. Seman, Office Manager/Procurement Officer or visit our Central Office in Garapan Saipan, during regular business hours, 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/ **JESSE S. PALACIOS**
Corporate Director

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
Director, Procurement & Supply

Job Vacancy Announcement

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER

Classification: Hourly, may lead to a salaried staff position.

Wage Range: $10.50 to $12.00 per hour, depending on qualifications and experience.

Reports to: General Manager

JOB DESCRIPTION
Summary/Objective: The human resource manager is directly responsible for the overall administration, coordination and evaluation of the human resource function.

Essential Functions: Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.
1. Develops and administers various human resources plans and procedures for all company personnel.
2. Plans, organizes and controls all activities of the department. Participates in developing department goals, objectives and systems.
3. Helps GM develop, recommend and implement personnel policies and procedures; prepares and maintains handbook on policies and procedures; performs benefits administration to include claims resolution, change reporting, approving invoices for payment, annual re-evaluation of policies for cost-effectiveness, information activities program and cash flow.
4. Develops and maintains affirmative action program; files EEO-1 annually; maintains other records, reports and logs to conform to EEO regulations.
5. Conducts recruitment effort for all exempt and nonexempt personnel, students and temporary employees; conducts new-employee orientations; monitors career-pathing program, employee relations counseling, outplacement counseling and exit interviewing; writes and places advertisements.
6. Establishes and maintains department records and reports. Participates in administrative staff meetings and attends other meetings, such as seminars. Maintains company organization charts and employee directory.
7. Evaluates reports, decisions and results of department in relation to established goals. Recommends new approaches, policies and procedures to effect continual improvements in efficiency of department and services performed.
8. Performs other incidental and related duties as required and assigned.
9. Processes paperwork necessary for Contract Worker (CW) visa renewals, transfers, and new hires.
10. Maintains all records and generates reports required for USCIS and other agencies.
11. Manages the employee requests for HRP 401K program loans and other matters concerning the program.

Competencies:
1. Human Resources Capacity
2. Ethical Conduct
3. Strategic Thinking.
4. Leadership.
5. Decision Making.
6. Financial Management.

Work Environment: This job operates in a professional office environment. This role routinely uses standard office equipment such as computers, phones, photocopiers, filing cabinets and fax machines.

Physical Demands: The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. While performing the duties of this job, the employee is occasionally required to stand; walk; sit; use hands to finger, handle, or feel objects, tools or controls; reach with hands and arms; climb stairs; balance; stoop, kneel, crouch or crawl; talk or hear; and taste or smell. The employee must occasionally lift or move up to 25 pounds. Specific vision abilities required by the job include close vision, distance vision, color vision, peripheral vision, depth perception and the ability to adjust focus.

Position Type/Expected Hours of Work: This is a full-time position. Days and hours of work are Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 4 p.m. This position regularly requires long hours and sometimes weekend work.

Required Education and Experience: A bachelor’s degree and three years of human resource experience, or nine years’ experience in the HR field.

Preferred Additional Eligibility Qualification: SHRM Senior Certified Professional (SHRM-SCP) certification (preferred)

Other Duties: Work with accountant and office personnel to support needs of employees and management staff.

Send Resume: David L. Bush, General Manager, Hawaiian Rock Products,
PMB 139, PPP P.O. Box 10000, Saipan, MP 96950; by facsimile (670) 288-0408;
or by e-mail to dbush@hawaiianrock.com

HAW’N ROCK PRODUCTS CORP.

WE ARE AN EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

CIP projects move forward on Rota

OFFICE OF PRESS SECRETARY

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Lt. Gov. Victor Hocog and Rota officials break ground for the new parking lot for the Rota Mayor's Office, a Capital Improvement Project initiative.

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres joined a couple of groundbreaking ceremonies for Rota infrastructure projects last week.

One was the groundbreaking for the Capital Improvement Project or CIP grant for the Rota Department of Public Safety and Fire Station parking lot paving project.

Funded by the U.S. Department of the Interior through the Office of Insular Affairs, The project will consist of concrete pavement, traffic markers and signs, parking stalls inclusive of American Disability Act-compliant parking stalls, wheel stoppers, and drainage for storm water runoff to a designated ponding area in conformance with the BECQ Storm Water Manual. The project has been contracted to Pacific Cooperation in the amount of $184,100.

Torres said ensuring the timely implementation of capital improvement projects on Rota require collaboration with the Office of Capital Improvement and the leadership of Rota.

"Infrastructure needs are long overdue and this project addresses the infrastructure needs of key departments such as public safety in the community," Torres said in a statement.

Capital Improvement Projects require that before the development of any CIP, government entities must define and develop the criteria for needed infrastructure based on policies for implementing improvement plans that meet public interest and priorities.

Torres and Lt. Gov. Victor Hocog also joined the groundbreaking ceremony for the Rota Mayor's Office Parking Lot Paving Project.

"CIP projects continue to improve our infrastructure for our people. This harmonization of efforts benefit the people who we all serve," said Rota Mayor Efraim Atalig in a statement.

The project is funded by the U.S. Department of the Interior through the Office of Insular Affairs, and is contracted to Pacific Cooperation in the amount of $187,145.

The project improves the entrance and exit ways from the main road to the Rota Mayor's Office and will consist of concrete pavement, traffic markers and signs, parking stalls inclusive of an ADA-compliant parking stall, wheel stoppers, and will drain the storm water runoff to a designated ponding area in conformance with the BECQ Storm Water Manual.

The ceremony for the groundbreaking took place on Friday at the Rota Mayor's Office with several officials present to welcome a much-needed infrastructure improvement.

"This one of several ongoing projects that are getting off the ground," said Virgina Villagomez, special assistant for Management and Budget/CIP. "We will be doing a groundbreaking in a few hours for the Rota/DPS grounds all funded by our partners at the Office of Insular Affairs. We expect CIP projects throughout the CNMI to be completed this year."

NMI Triskelions all set for Good Friday tradition

JON PEREZ

TAU GAMMA PHI/SIGMA-Northern Mariana Islands Council president Vince Sablan, seated third left, and members of the fraternity/sorority will be marking their fourth year of community service for those who will trek up Mt. Tapochau on Good Friday.

The TAU GAMMA PHI/SIGMA-Northern Mariana Islands Council is all set to help community members who will be making the trek to the top of Mt. Tapochau on Good Friday.

Hundreds of Catholic and other Christian pilgrims are again expected make their way on Saipan's highest peak in observance of the annual tradition.

The CNMI Triskelions, for the fourth straight year, will be doing their share in providing water and other refreshments to pilgrims.

TAU GAMMA PHI/SIGMA NMIC president Vince Sablan is asking members to join them in setting up their tent on Thursday night. He added members would meet in front of 99 Cents Store at 10pm before going up to their designated spot on Mt. Tapochau.

"Large groups of people are expected to be on top of Mt. Tapochau at around 4am on Friday so I'm asking all of our members to do their share in giving out what we have," said Sablan.

Last year, the TAU GAMMA PHI/SIGMA NMIC was among those that set up a booth to assist pilgrims and other walkers.

Rep. Vinnie Sablan (Ind-Saipan), the Saipan Mayor's Office, the American Red Cross-NMI Chapter, the United Filipino Organization, and the Camacho family also had booths that provided refreshments.

TAU GAMMA PHI/SIGMA NMIC president Sablan also said that they would be holding other community projects as part of their fraternity's socio-civic programs. They are also among the recognized members of UFO since 2012.

"We previously did a medical mission in 2011 and another in affiliation with UFO. Medical mission is close to my heart since I'm a nursing graduate. I want to push it more to our community," added Sablan.

The TAU GAMMA PHI/SIGMA NMIC is incorporated in the CNMI Office of the Registrar of Corporations as a non-profit corporation and is also duly recognized by U.S. Department of the Treasury's the Internal Revenue Service.

University of the Philippines-Diliman students Rodrigo Confesor, Roy Ordinario, Talek Pablo, Vedasto Venida, Restituto Alfonso, and Romeo Fortes founded the TAU GAMMA PHI fraternity on Oct. 4, 1968.

It started as the ORDER OF THE U.P. TRISKELIONS but membership swelled and they adapted the Greek letters TAU GAMMA PHI. Its sorority, TAU GAMMA SIGMA, was founded a year after on Jan. 17.

The TAU GAMMA PHI/SIGMA is a socio-economic service fraternity/sorority. ***(Jon Perez)***

'Observe silence this Holy Week'

Rev. Fr. Ryan Jimenez is inviting Catholics and other Christians to observe silence and try to reflect on the passion and death of Jesus Christ this Holy Week.

"Most of the time we are drawn out by all the noise in our surroundings. While driving, we are used to listening to music and even today's youth they just put on their headphones or get busy with their gadgets," said Jimenez in his homily during the Palm Sunday service at the packed Mt. Carmel Cathedral.

Jimenez

CNMI Catholics began their observance of the Holy Week last Sunday with Palm Sunday, which commemorates Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Masses were held in the Commonwealth's 11 parishes were palm fronds or branches were blessed.

Jimenez, the Dioece of Chalan Kanoa's apostolic administrator and Mt. Carmel Cathedral's rector, added that people could either pray at home or find a quiet place on the island to reflect on the mysteries of the Christian faith.

"Let us try to spend some quiet time, to be silent, and reflect this Holy Week. Meditate on the passion, death, and resurrection of our Lord," said Jimenez, who also challenged those who will be making the annual trek to Mt. Tapochau to also do the same.

Jimenez added the annual Good Friday tradition on Saipan had become sort of a celebration as various organizations have been offering refreshments. He said that he is not against the community service being done by these organizations but advised community members to make prayer and sacrifice the center of their observance.

Jimenez is also calling on volunteers this year to help carry the more than 10-foot cross in front of the cathedral. The cross will be carried from the cathedral to Mt. Tapochau in a procession that would start early Friday morning.

He said that there was a year that they almost failed to do the annual tradition since there were only a few volunteers.

The 14 Stations of the Cross will also be strategically located throughout the oath up Mt. Tapochau were a prayer service will also be held before the cross would be erected. ***(Jon Perez)***

Navy to conduct training in Orote Point

ASAN, Guam—The Navy will conduct training at Orote Point on March 24 from 4pm to 8pm.

These trainings are designed to enhance the readiness of military personnel. Residents in surrounding areas should not be alarmed if they see or hear increased activity associated with the trainings.

The general public—especially fishermen, commercial pilots, and marine tour operators—are advised to stay clear of the areas during the dates and times indicated.

Orote Point is contained within the following coordinates: 13° 25' 24"N/144° 35' 15"E.

For more information, contact the Joint Region Marianas Public Affairs Office at (671) 349-4055/3209. ***(PR)***

NMTI to offer classes to food stamp recipients

The Northern Marianas Trades Institute (NMTI) and the Department of Community Cultural Affairs' Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) recently finalized the details associated with providing classes for NAP recipients.

The first class entitled "Prep for Success" is scheduled to start Saturday, March 26, at the NMTI campus in Lower Base with the initial 25 students identified by NAP.

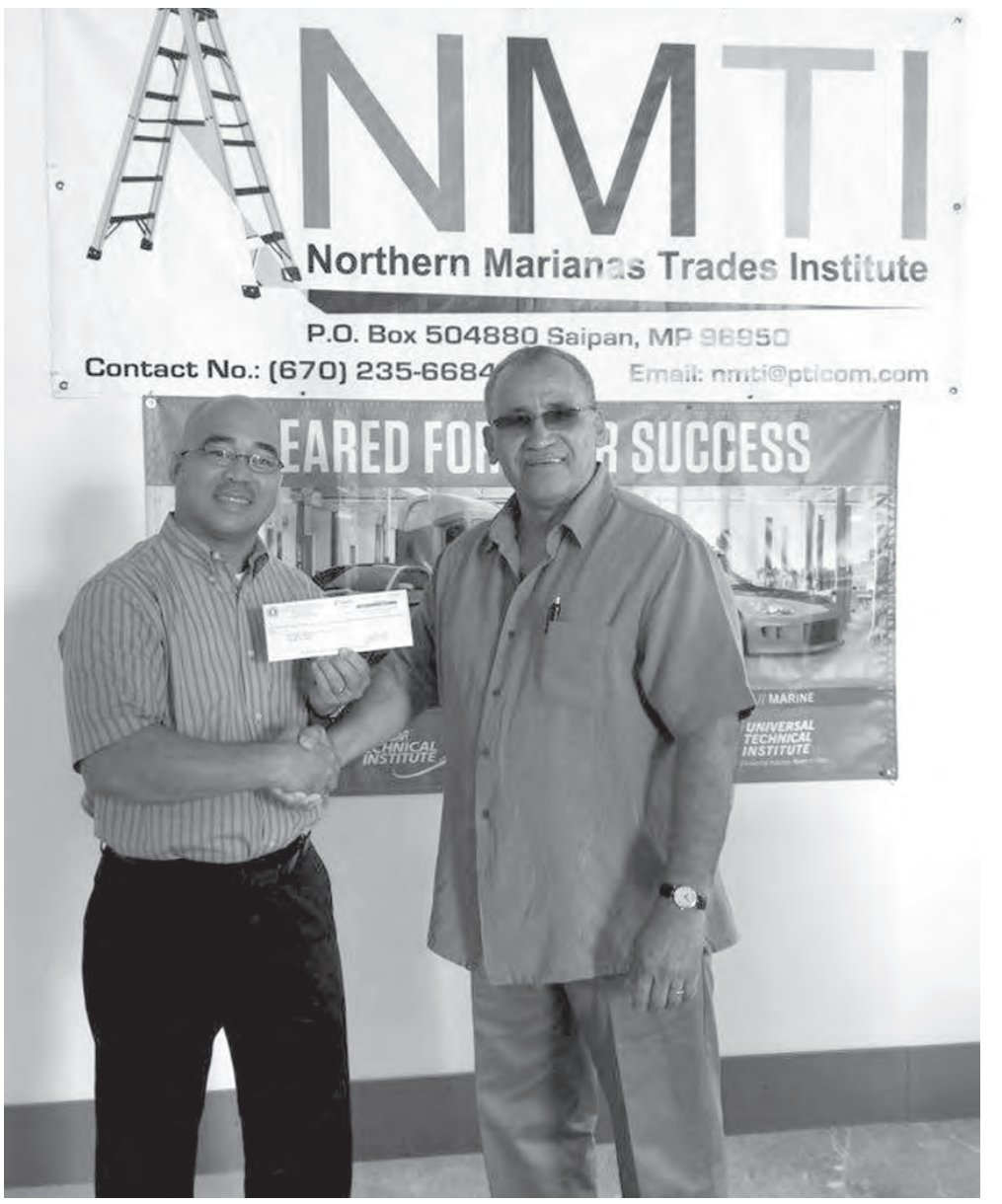
The second scheduled class cohort is set for April 2, 2016. The participants will be attending one of the two scheduled sessions as part of NAP's goal of empowering its clientele toward finding prosperous careers. Generally, the course involves lessons in employment expectations, rediscovering oneself and their aspirations of a career path, and the next steps to take in order to begin such path.

According to NAP administrator Walter Macaranas, "As part of the NAP requirements to engage able-bodied NAP recipients to participate in education, training, and work programs we actively sought the educational expertise of NMTI. Individuals required to enroll in the work requirement program must register with Division of Employment Services of the Department of Labor and be assisted to apply for a job. NAP has selected 50 participants, currently enrolled in the work requirement program, to attend these full-day sessions."

NMTI Student Development director and HR manager Victor Mesta feels that such efforts on NAP's part is highly encouraging. Mesta notes that, "this is just the beginning of what we see as a potentially fruitful relationship which in turn benefits our community at large. Mr. Macaranas and his team at NAP came to us and we are ecstatic that NAP sees us as a great resource for NAP registered clients. NMTI offers an array of career paths in the areas of construction, culinary arts, automotive technology, and hotel and restaurant operations. By beginning with the 'Prep for Success' course, students get a glimpse of the trades currently available as these courses are what CNMI business' place in high demand at this particular point in time due to the Contract Worker (CW) situation."

Macaranas further stated, "The next steps could begin with adult basic education or higher education, or training, or employment. The participants must choose the career path they wish to embark on. Each participant will be assessed and will be provided recommendations on available resources one will have to partake such as applying for financial aid, grants, scholarships, and/or assistance at the Workforce Investment Agency (WIA) so they could enroll at NMC or NMTI or other local training institutions."

If the participant is determined work-ready and wishes to further seek employment, the participant will referred to the Division of Employment Services and be further assisted with employment. The NAP will track the progress and determine whether the participants are on track with their path. The participants may lose their privilege from NAP participation if they're not on such a track. ***(PR)***



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Department of Community Cultural Affairs' Nutrition Assistance Program administrator Walter Macaranas, left, shakes hands with Northern Marianas Trades Institute Student Development director and HR manager Victor Mesta after announcing the details of NMTI offering classes to NAP recipients.

Triple J donates Mazda 3 to Great Balls of Fire Golf tourney

In support of the CNMI Fire and EMS Association Inaugural Great Balls of Fire Golf Tournament, Triple J Motors became a major sponsor for the tournament by donating a 2016 Mazda 3 Sedan as a hole-in-one prize.

Triple J Truckload Store has also contributed various prizes to be raffled off during the banquet luncheon.

Triple J continues to be a major contributor to various community outreach programs and non-profit organization including the CNMI Fire and EMS Association, which helps CNMI Firefighters and their families.

The annual golf tournament help raise money for the Fire and EMS Association to assist both active and retired firefighters with medical referrals, firefighter funerals, recognition ceremony for our emergency medical technicians and firefighters. The association also assists in various CNMI community outreach such as the "Breast Cancer Awareness" boot drive, Domestic Violence Prevention and Education to name a few. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Triple J and CNMI Fire and EMS Association officials pose with the 2016 Mazda 3 Sedan the former donated as a hole-in-one prize for the latter's Inaugural Great Balls of Fire Golf Tournament.

Sheeka Tareyama, right, meets with local tomato farmers in their fields to evaluate infected plants.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

UOG CNAS scientists receive $160K in grant awards

University of Guam College of Natural and Applied Sciences (CNAS) researchers and extension agents were recently awarded over $160,000 in several grants that will assist Guam farmers and gardeners. The funds were allocated from the USDA Farm Bill 2016 Plant Pest and Disease and Disaster Prevention Program.

Dr. Robert Schlub and his team (Roger Brown and Sheeka Tareyama) received a grant totaling $38,320 to continue working with tomato farmers monitoring for bacteria wilt that can potentially decimate entire crops. The team is also monitoring for the tomato leafminer moth, scientific name Tuta absoluta, which is a very damaging pest. Although the insect has not yet been found on Guam, it has been spreading around the globe destroying tomato crops. The team is setting traps with pheromone lures as a proactive measure to contain the spread of this serious moth pest before it causes a problem for the island's farmers.

Plant pathologist Dr. Andrea Blas received a $24,000 award for enhanced diagnostic testing of coconut palm viroids including the tinangaja viroid.

Dr. Aubrey Moore was awarded $100,000 grant for biocontrol of the coconut rhinoceros beetle. These funds will allow him to continue work on finding a virus that will be effective in controlling the biotype of beetles found on Guam.

UOG CNAS scientists continue to successfully receive grant awards to carry out research and extension activities that serve Guam and the region. For more information, please visit http://cnas-re.uog.edu/. ***(PR)***

Opinion

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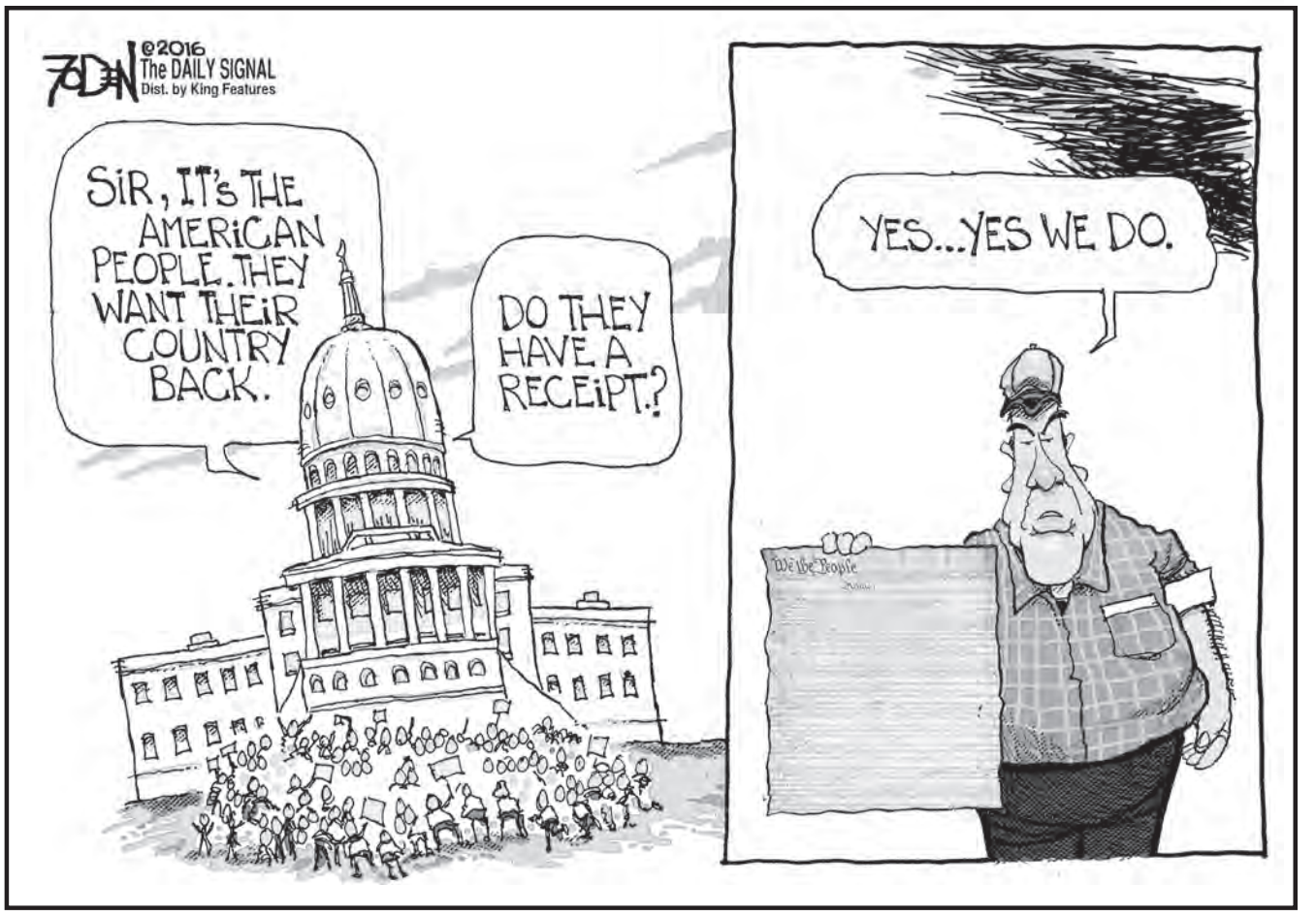
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SIR, IT'S THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. THEY WANT THEIR COUNTRY BACK.
DO THEY HAVE A RECEIPT?
YES...YES WE DO.
We the People

EDITORIAL

Hillary Clinton vs the NRA

In 2008, Barack Obama bent over backward to defuse suspicions from gun owners and their chief lobbying group, the National Rifle Association. "I believe in the Second Amendment," he assured one audience. "I will not take your shotgun away. I will not take your rifle away. I won't take your handgun away."

A lot of good it did him. The NRA ran ads saying he "would be the most anti-gun president in American history." Four years later, with that fear unrealized, NRA Executive Vice President Wayne LaPierre warned that Obama was plotting "to ensure re-election by lulling gun owners to sleep" so he could then "erase" the Second Amendment. That, of course, also didn't happen.

Back in 2008, running against Obama, Hillary Clinton also tried to make nice with the gun-rights crowd, fondly recalling that she had learned to shoot as a child. But Obama's experience then and since proved there is nothing a Democratic presidential nominee can say or do to appease NRA sympathizers.

So Clinton is taking a different approach this time. She's endorsed the gun control measures sought in vain by Obama after the Sandy Hook massacre, including universal background checks. She's slammed Bernie Sanders for supporting legislation passed in 2005 giving firearms manufacturers protection from some lawsuits. Clinton's message to the gun lobby is: Bring it on.

That shift is notable particularly because of her husband's experience in the White House challenging the NRA. After winning passage of a federal ban on assault weapons, Bill Clinton saw his party wiped out in the 1994 elections, giving Republicans control of the House for the first time in 40 years. Democrats suffered a net loss of 54 seats; the then-president attributed 20 of those defeats to the gun issue.

He also blamed that issue for Al Gore's narrow loss to George W. Bush in 2000. "I think the NRA had enough votes in New Hampshire, in Arkansas, maybe in Tennessee and in Missouri, to beat us," Bill Clinton said later.

What's changed? Some states with lots of gun owners who once were up for grabs, like Arkansas and Tennessee, now appear out of reach for Democrats. Nationally, public opinion is on Clinton's side: Not only do 89 percent of Americans support universal background checks, so do 87 percent of Republicans and 84 percent of voters in households with guns.

On top of that, it's become clear that the NRA will do everything it can to defeat any Democratic nominee. Clinton clearly figures that these days, trying to get along with the NRA won't win her any votes, and challenging it may.

Changing demographics also matter. As Ronald Brownstein wrote in The Atlantic, "Since 2000, Democrats have grown far less dependent on the blue-collar whites who are the most resistant to gun control measures, and have replaced them with growing groups like people of color and college-educated white women more open to the idea."

Clinton also thinks the issue can help fend off her primary opponent, because of his vote on a 2005 bill that sub-

See HILLARY on Next Page

Cape Fear in Cape Air

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime Vergara previously taught at SVES in the CNMI. A peripatetic pedagogue, he last taught in China but makes Honolulu, Shenyang, and Saipan home. He can be reached at pinoypanda2031@aol.com. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the Saipan Tribune.

I lived in Greensboro, North Carolina but I never got east to Cape Hateras or Cape Fear southeast. Somehow, being a Pacific Islander, the ocean did not offer much allure, never mind that the historic Wright Brothers' airborne experiment was in Kitty Hawk, and the Atlantic hurricanes (typhoons in these parts) slammed into the Tar Heel coast.

Cape Fear, however, was our first introduction to the State, compliments of a movie of the same title, acted by Gregory Peck and Robert Mitchum in the '60s, and reprised by Nick Nolte and Robert de Niro in the '90s. The movie accents the American penchant for "fear" as the primary motivating factor, with the moralism that makes lawyers act like judges, in this case, withholding full defense to who they consider objectionable. The lawyer suppressed papers that might lighten up sentencing if not invalidate charges altogether.

The Pilgrims and Puritans' desire to be out of Royal supervision were evident in Cape Cod; Jamestown's was very defensive relative to the Native Americans. NatGeo once printed poster drawings of Jamestown and Werowocomoco in Powhatan's chiefdom titled, When Cultures collided, and the difference is very telling. Werewocomoco was wide open and welcoming of strangers, fully integrated into the surrounding environment; Jamestown was all defense, moat and tall pointed logs for walls.

I am sure "fear" is not the motivating factor that had Senators Igosomar, Palacios, and Santos of the CNMI Legislature, and the Chiefs of the Micronesian nations, wrote letters of concern to the regional airline for rural America, Cape Air. Never mind that they get federal subsidy of almost $49 per passenger; they fulfill a needed air travel service to less frequent routes, albeit, mostly to businessman who will not be bothered by time spent on land and sea transport.

Service in Micronesia is, however, nothing to brag home about. Letters from Igisomar's office showed that Cape Air's service had not been exemplary. Cape Air's online record shows it was supposed to have two ATR-42 320s in its hanger plying the GUM-SPN route. It was charged that only one functioning aircraft is available, and when it conks out, like the experience of a local family not too long ago, it meant being stuck at the GUM airport for three days.

I have taken the UA code-shared Cape Air toward three directions from GUM, to the Philippines, Shanghai, and Honolulu, and to get to GUM involved getting into a Cape Air ATR-42 (the craft is manufactured by the same firm as the AirBus in Europe with the 42 in the number approximating passenger capacity; the ATR-72 carries more passengers). Nothing extraordinary about the flights, one way or the other, but my frequency was a limited sample.

What appeared disturbing was the news of the alleged treatment of indigenous folks on the SPN-GUM-SPN flights where they were reportedly discriminated against, perhaps, for the absence of urban sophistication common among air travel clientele. I do not find this unusual for discrimination is more than a legal term; applied to this situation, it borders into racist treatment of indigenes that is not uncommon in many parts of the world. This is not to justify the treatment but to make it understandable.

If "fear" has not been the motivating factor in thesSenators' concern, it is a big item in American human relations. China's popular image abroad is the Fu Manchu as the ultimate boo-ga-boo underneath Xi Jing Ping's watch; the U.S. accuses China of intruding into the China Seas as if the 7th Fleet was resident there. Yo! We do not call it "China Sea" for nothing!

The widespread "fear" evident in the U.S. began with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which was only repealed when China became an ally in 1943. The racism did not abate; much at the ground level still prevails. Chinese love to stick to their Chinatowns, many real estate laws confine them to that location. However, if the Honolulu "Chinatown" is any indication, the old-timer Chinese has moved to the suburbs while the newly arrived Chinese of Vietnam attend to the shops!

Canada's Ontario and Quebec fears America's "undue" influence on the Canucks but U.S. presence in Winnipeg to Vancouver, and especially Calgary during the annual round-up, the cowboy hats are vintage Texas.

Cuba and Mexico are the objects of our current fear of the Latino, and with The Donald's heightened rhetoric against immigration, Obama's friendliness to the Castro brothers, and the perceived determination of GOP-despised Admin-pushed connection to southern neighbors, many undocumented aliens in the U.S. are fearful of deportation after the election if Dem Bones do not prevail.

Senator Rubio, on his gracious exit from the presidential campaign before the Florida primary, affirmed that America is a nation of hope. The GOP rattled by fear mongering for now is also the party of Abe Lincoln.

Cape Air might be close to Cape Fear, but it also can be the Cape of Good Hope. A choice.

Coming to know Christ

By ORLANDO R. BARONE
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Orlando R. Barone is a writer in Doylestown, Pa. Readers may send him email at orby114@aol.com. He wrote this for The Philadelphia Inquirer.

Catholics notoriously know nothing about Bibles, and I was a good Catholic. I'd heard little snippets at Mass, but I never read anything out of an actual Bible until, at age 18, I decided to try it.

I did realize that the stuff about Jesus was in the New Testament, so I flipped through the preliminary material and eventually got to the Four Gospels. Great. I would read one of those. I saw right away that Matthew and Luke were out of the question — too long. Mark was shorter than John, so I made my choice: I'd read Mark's Gospel.

I received the shock of my life. This was not a series of "passages" or quotable quotes you slip into Sunday Mass and call "the Gospel." This was a story. In fact, my first impression was that it was very much an adventure story. I was reading the tale of the one I called Son of God. I barely knew the guy.

Mark did not begin with babies, mangers or singing angels, just a dirty, insect-eating wild man named John knee-deep in a river screaming that it was time everybody wised up. I soon learned that one of Mark's favorite themes was screaming. Everybody screams — townsfolk, possessed people, demons, pigs, even Jesus, and more often than you'd guess.

So, after the wild man, John, makes clear that something big is on the way, there he is, no fanfare, walking right into the Jordan. John says, "He's the man," and the clouds part and Jesus is sort of forcibly nudged out into the desert for 40 days, Moses-like. Then he is off from town to town, grabbing disciples along the way. They and Jesus hit a town, head right to the synagogue, and Jesus goes up to the pulpit. (You'll have to bear with me; I was picturing a Catholic Church here. I even imagined a crucifix behind Jesus. I now see that this would likely have startled him.) So, he begins preaching and, yes, just as I warned you, a man starts screaming. The man is possessed by more than one demon and they are loud.

Jesus says, "Be silent and come out." The second part they do; silent, not so much. Turns out the demons all know Jesus is the son of God; later we find out the people are all scratching their heads saying, "Hey, who is this fellow?" It struck me funny. I think Mark meant this to be funny. People and demons both see Jesus fulfill all the scriptures with amazing healings, food multiplications, water walking, tsunami taming, and the demons say, "Son of God, check!" The people say, "What manner of man is this?"

Like with the pigs. Jesus sees a man have a perfectly described epileptic seizure. I knew this because my brother had epilepsy. To people of that time it would seem like possession by a legion of demons. So Jesus casts out the legion, and the people ask him politely to send them into the nearby pigs. Jesus obliges. But not really. The pigs, 2,000 of them, scramble down a hill and drown in the river. Screaming.

Have you ever seen 2,000 pigs careen down a hill and drown? Me neither, but we are certainly talking major ruckus. I laughed, but the townsfolk, who always seem to be loitering around, come up, tap Jesus on the shoulder, and say, "Um, would you mind kind of getting out of our town?" For some reason the 2,000 squealing, drowning pigs made them nervous. Not to mention, the formerly possessed guy they had chained up was now calm as a cucumber.

It was like that everywhere. Jesus enters a nice little village probably during siesta time and starts some commotion or other. Most often he is healing sick people. Jesus raised another kind of commotion. The religious leaders got leery of him because he looked like competition and he wasn't one of them. He broke rules and then said he was actually keeping the rules better than they were. He acted as if the Sabbath was for taking time off from hard work, not one more day when you had to watch your every move. The Sabbath thing seemed like a way bigger deal than I would have figured if I had any basis for figuring such things.

Later on I discovered that Jesus was reforming Sabbath observance, not abolishing it. In an era when laborers were near slaves, the Sabbath, one day a week to rest, was all that stood between them and death by work. But even during that first shocking read, I realized that Jesus saw himself as the champion of the weak, the vulnerable, the hungry and those with only a mite to give.

Basically, it seemed to me that Jesus was cleaning up — exorcising demons and chasing thieves from the temple — and making things whole by healing people of leprosy, hemophilia, epilepsy, glaucoma, birth defects. He was cleaning house, our house, our planet. He was cleansing us, too, and then he turned to those who wanted to follow him and said: "What are you standing around for? Grab an apron and rubber gloves, and get to work." That's not a quote, but it's what I heard.

In the last half century I've caught glimpses of his gentle hand here and there. On a horrible night when I thought my baby daughter was going to die, I did think it was his tunic passing me, and the night got a little less frightening. Mostly, though, I hear him in the distance asking my help in his massive cleanup operation. I wish I could say I've done better than average.

The cross haunts me, our ever-present impulse to kill that which might make us clean, just because we like being unclean or we have a competing notion of what clean is. Whatever he was doing for us, he surely was no quitter. His closest friends believed that even death didn't stop him; there were plenty of aprons for everyone.

I am very much part of the adventure now, and it is a joy. Still, I am insistently left with a single question, one I know I'll never tire of asking and striving to answer. I turn to the villager beside me, elbow him gently, furrow my brow a bit, and wonder once again, "What manner of man is this?"

HILLARY

From Page 10

stantially protected gunmakers, sellers and trade groups against lawsuits. Most Democrats favor greater regulation of firearms, and she can claim to speak for them better than Sanders does. In their debates, Clinton has used the issue to put him on the defensive.

There are risks in her forthright stance. If she gets the nomination, she could turn out gun owners who might otherwise stay home on Election Day, in states where the contest is close. If a Republican is elected, the gun lobby will be able to claim credit. If not, though, the NRA is likely to face a president who is not on its side — and has no reason to fear it.

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Syrian Kurds may be our best hope for displacing the Islamic State

By TRUDY RUBIN
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Trudy Rubin is a columnist and editorial-board member for the Philadelphia Inquirer. *Readers may write to her at:* Philadelphia Inquirer, *P.O. Box 8263, Philadelphia, Pa. 19101, or by email at trubin@phillynews.com.*

AMUDA, Syria — To cross into the Kurdish region of Syria you scramble onto a scruffy motorboat at Fishkhabour in the north of Iraqi Kurdistan, near the remote corner where Iraq, Turkey and Syria meet.

Then you chug across the dun-colored Tigris River and disembark on a barren rocky shore in Syria. A few hundred yards away, long lines of trucks and oil tankers cross back and forth between Syria and Iraq atop two shaky pontoon bridges, the Syrian Kurds' only commercial lifeline.

Welcome to the self-declared, federal region of Rojava and North Syria, which stretches along the Turkish border and is recognized by no one. Allied with the Americans, helped by the Russians, despised by the Turks, at odds with its Iraqi Kurdish cousins, the region is a study in contradictions.

But little Rojava already plays an outsized role in the international fight against the Islamic State. The Kurdish Peoples' Protections Units (half of whom are women) are the only Syrian ground forces that have succeeded in fighting the Islamic State, or even want to do it (most of the groups the United States tried to train were far more interested in fighting the regime of Bashar Assad).

Rojava's leaders want to play an even bigger role, with more U.S. assistance — maybe even taking out the crucial Islamic State home base in Raqqa. Could they do it? Should we give them more help? What motivates them?

Here are my thoughts from a recent trip.

Rojava is a land of martyrs. Drive from Fishkhabour past desolate fields dotted with small oil derricks, and you reach a string of towns where posters of dead male and female fighters adorn every light pole.

On the day I arrived the Kurds were marking the 12th anniversary of the stadium massacre in Qamishli, their largest city. On that day, Assad's troops mowed down 54 protesters at a football match.

But, despite their loathing for Assad, the Syrian Kurds refrained from joining the Arab Spring uprising. (Indeed, in Qamishli, there is still a small regime military contingent uneasily on guard at the entry to the airport.)

"There is no collaboration with the government," I was told by Aldar Khelil, a senior politician who had worked for years in the Kurdish underground. "We tried to make use of the situation (to build up our own institutions) while the regime was busy with other things."

In every town I visited, big banners hung across traffic circles featuring the face of Abdullah Ocalan, the founder of the Turkish Kurdish rebel group, the PKK, who now sits in a Turkish prison. The United States has designated the PKK a terrorist organization, but has not labeled the Syrian Kurds' Democratic Union Party, or PYD, as such.

Rojavans insist that their organization is separate from the PKK, although they share a fervent belief in Ocalan's ideology, which Kurdish officials here are constantly quoting.

"The PYD has never been a part of the PKK," I was told by Amina Osse, the party's deputy foreign affairs manager and one of several strong women holding top posts in the Kurdish government. "There is only one main link," she added, "and that is the theories and philosophy of Ocalan."

The Turkish ideologue's theories shifted in the mid-1990s from a variant of Marxism to a focus on building local self-government — based largely on the works of a 1960s U.S. leftist, Murray Bookchin. Opo — as Ocalan is called here — focused on promoting the rights of women, and officials pursue that goal with a seriousness I've never seen elsewhere in the Mideast.

Whatever their historic ties with their Turkish counterparts, the Rojava Kurds are not interested in fighting Ankara — or Damascus. As Redur Xelil, the spokesman for the Kurdish military noted, Syrian Kurds have not attacked Turkish soldiers on their long border, even as the conflict between the PKK and the Turkish military heats up.

Instead, these Kurds are heavily focused on two fronts, both of which are critical for U.S. policy efforts in the region.

First, they want to build federalism within Syria. Osse says her party envisions five federal states within the country: the first would be Rojava and North Syria, including Raqqa if liberated (to ensure that the Islamic State can't return). The other four: Jebel Druze; Latakia, the redoubt of Assad's Alawi community; the major Sunni area that includes Hama and Homs; and the capital, Damascus.

Aldar Khelil dreams of a "Middle Eastern Union, like the European Union," in which federal Kurdish regions within Turkey, Syria and Iraq would have relations. "No, we do not want one big Kurdistan," he insists.

These ideas worry Turkey, which fears that the Rojava experiment will inspire its own Kurds. The Turks have closed their border to Rojava.

Yet the idea of federalism as an antidote to collapsing Middle East states is being debated throughout the region. Such formulas may be the only hope if peace talks ever get serious.

The Syrian Kurds haven't been invited to peace talks in Geneva because the Turks are opposed to their presence. This is nuts.

The Syrian Kurds' second goal is to get rid of the Islamic State. "Only the Kurds have stopped ISIS (in Syria)," says Osse, using another name for the Islamic State. She is correct.

With U.S. air support, and coordination by 50 U.S. special forces operatives, the Kurds have been taking back swaths of Syrian territory and critical towns such as Shedadi. They have formed a joint force with Sunni Arabs that would smooth the way in retaking Arab areas.

"We think we should make more progress in relations with the United States," says Xelil, sitting beneath a drawing of historic Kurdish heroes.

On his coffee table are two dozen passports from Russia, Kazakhstan, Libya and Tunisia, lifted off Islamic State fighters killed in recent battles. All these jihadis entered Syria via Turkey — which did too little to stop them — something the Kurds have complained about for years.

Khelil said that much-touted Russian help to the Syrian Kurds — bomb strikes on rebel groups that were shelling their towns — was "never on the same level" as their cooperation with the Americans. The Russians, he said, pitched in only to annoy Turkey, which had just shot down a Russian plane.

He added that, at U.S. request in order to calm Ankara, the Syrian Kurds had "put on hold" their effort to extend their self-proclaimed region the whole length of the Turkish border. They were willing to focus on liberating Raqqa if Americans gave "more technology and weapons" — and recognition.

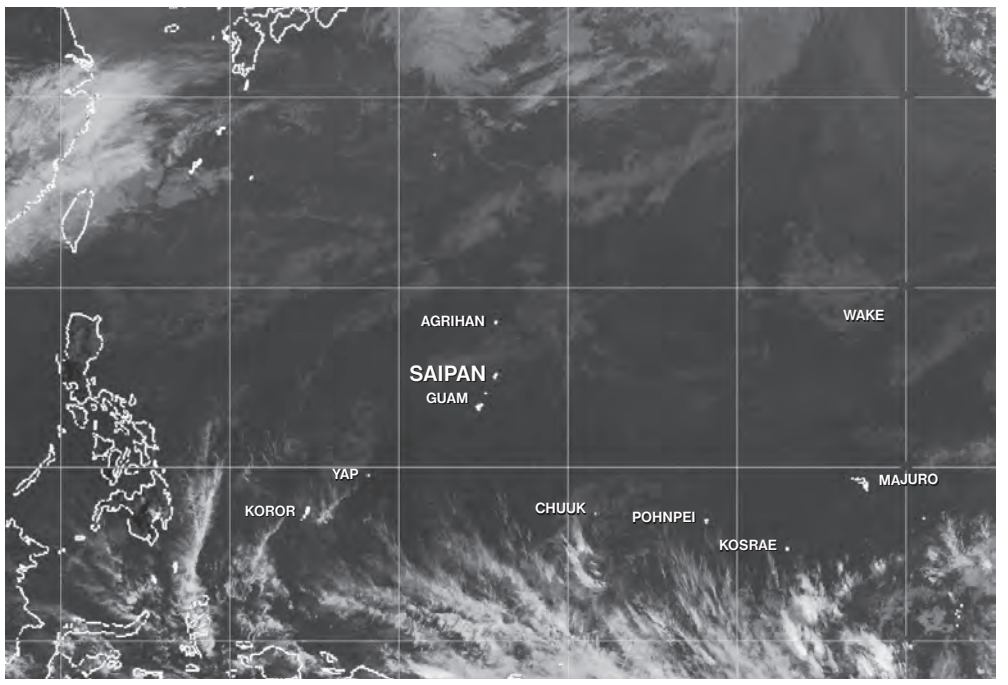
Maybe this idea is unworkable, but shouldn't we at least ponder it, and provide the Kurds with more assistance? After all, unlike all the other groups that Washington has tried to train in Syria, the Kurds have proved they have the will to fight the jihadis. If we ever want to liberate Raqqa, they may be the best hope.

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Partly cloudy with a slight chance of light showers. Light and variable winds.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. East winds 5 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of light showers.
▲87° ▼75°	▲87° ▼75°	▲87° ▼75°	▲87° ▼75°	▲87° ▼75°

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 12:58 PM, MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2016
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front curves southwestward from near Midway island through 24N180 to end east of Wake Island at 18N174E. Scattered showers are seen along and up to 110 miles northwest of this feature. Another diffused cold front reaches southwestward from north of Minami Tori Shima through 25N153E to beyond 130E at 19N. Scattered showers are found along and up to 140 miles northwest of this boundary. A trade-wind disturbance is causing widely scattered showers near Chuuk between 3N and 9N from 149E to 155E. Converging trade winds are producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms south of Pohnpei, Kosrae and Majuro but near Tarawa and Butaritari atolls south of a line from 2N154E to 7N180.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

Micronesia

Guam And Rota	Partly Cloudy	▲85	▼76
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	▲88	▼76
Yap	Partly Cloudy	▲89	▼77
Chuuk	Showers	▲87	▼81
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	▲87	▼79
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	▲84	▼80
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	▲84	▼81

Around the Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲76	▼68
Beijing	Cloudy	▲58	▼36
Hong Kong	Showers	▲69	▼66
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	▲82	▼68
London	Partly Cloudy	▲55	▼41
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	▲71	▼53
Manila	Mostly Sunny	▲95	▼74
Melbourne	Sunny	▲80	▼56
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲69	▼57
New York	Partly Cloudy	▲52	▼35
Osaka	Sunny	▲60	▼43
Paris	Partly Cloudy	▲54	▼39
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲63	▼42
Rome	Partly Cloudy	▲73	▼53
Salem	Thunderstorms	▲52	▼42
San Francisco	Showers	▲60	▼51
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	▲57	▼37
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	▲59	▼43
Washington, DC	Windy	▲53	▼35

NMI CRIME STOPPERS
Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Tides

Saipan Harbor

2:14 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet
8:30 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
2:41 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.6 Feet
8:14 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:20 AM	6:28 PM
Wednesday	6:19 AM	6:28 PM
Thursday	6:18 AM	6:28 PM
Friday	6:18 AM	6:29 PM
Saturday	6:17 AM	6:29 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	5:32 PM	5:20 AM
Wednesday	6:19 PM	5:59 AM
Thursday	7:06 PM	6:38 AM
Friday	7:53 PM	7:16 AM
Saturday	8:40 PM	7:55 AM

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 1, 2016

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA2924	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA2922	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA2921	1:30pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota
UA2920	2:20pm	3:10pm	2, 3, 6
UA2928	6:05pm	6:55pm	Daily
UA2926	9:50pm	10:40pm	Daily

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA2921	1:30pm	2:05pm	1, 4, 5, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA2921	2:35pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL297	4:20pm	7:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ626	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ628	3:50am	7:40am	Daily
7C3403	4:35am	8:30am	Daily
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	5:30am	3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN
OZ626/701	2:50am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA2924/191	4:15am	9:00am	3, 6 via GUM
UA2924/PR111	4:15am	9:20am	Daily via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2922/193	8:40am	11:10pm	2, 5 via GUM-ROR
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:30pm	5 via Rota-GUM
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:50pm	1, 4, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA2921/193	1:30pm	11:10pm	5 via Rota-GUM
UA2920/183	2:20pm	9:30pm	2 via GUM
UA2920/183	2:20pm	9:50pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA2920/193	2:20pm	11:10pm	2 via GUM-ROR
UA2928/183	6:05pm	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA2928/183	6:05pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2928/193	6:05pm	11:10pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA2926/191	9:50pm	7:20am+1	1, 6 via GUM
UA2926/191	9:50pm	9:00am+1	3, 6 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ628/721	3:50am	12:50am	Daily via ICN
UA2922/159	8:40am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA2921/159	1:30pm	10:35pm	1, 5 via Rota-GUM
UA2920/159	2:20pm	10:35pm	3, 6 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA2923	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA2925	7:15am	8:05am	Daily
UA2921	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA2920	12:10pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6 via Rota
UA2927	4:45pm	5:35pm	Daily
UA2929	8:30pm	9:20pm	Daily

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA2920	12:10pm	12:45pm	2, 3, 6

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA2920	1:15pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:35am	3:10pm	Daily

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ625	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
OZ627	9:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily
7C3404	10:10pm	3:30am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:30pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA190/2927	9:55am	5:35pm	2, 6, 7 via GUM
UA190/2929	9:55am	9:20pm	2, 6, 7 via GUM
UA190/2927	10:00am	5:35pm	3 via GUM
UA190/2929	10:00am	9:20pm	3 via GUM
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ702/627	12:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
PR110/UA2925	10:05pm	8:05am+1	Daily via GUM
UA192/2925	10:20pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA192/2920	10:20pm	1:50pm+1	2, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA192/2927	10:20pm	5:35pm+1	2, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA192/2929	10:20pm	9:20pm+1	2, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2925	11:59pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/2920	11:59pm	1:50pm+1	2, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2927	11:59pm	5:35pm+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/2929	11:59pm	9:20pm+1	2, 5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ724/627	2:20pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
UA116/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA116/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA116/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju AirETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
6:30AM	6:45AM	Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

Call for entries for Humanities Film Festival

The Northern Marianas Humanities Council continues its call for entries for the 2nd Humanities Film Festival to be held in April 2016.

The festival's theme is "Soudelor and the Winds of Change in the CNMI."

Filmmakers are invited to submit entries that explore and address the ethical, philosophical, and existential questions raised in the aftermath of Typhoon Soudelor.

The festival is open to individuals who are 18 and older and current residents of the CNMI. High school students (9th-12 grades) are also eligible to submit films. Production companies or companies that routinely produce commercial grade videos are not eligible to participate.

Films may be submitted under three categories—Narrative, Documentary, and Student. Entries in each of these categories may be a feature film (more than 30 minutes) or a film short (no more than 15 minutes).

In accordance with festival guidelines, submitters must have had a major creative role in the film's production. Additionally, entries must be mostly moving pictures, not montages of still images and formatted in Quicktime MOV at 780p or higher resolution.

Entries must be received by the Humanities Council no later than 4pm on Thursday, March 31, 2016. Late entries or entries that do not address the festival's theme will not be considered.

Films will be screened in April at a time, date and venue to be announced. First through third place entries in each category will receive cash prizes.

Entry forms and festival guidelines and fact sheet may be downloaded from the council website www.northernmarianashumanities.org or picked up at the council's office in Springs Plaza, Gualo Rai.

Please contact council staff at 235-4785 for more information about this upcoming program. ***(PR)***

Express Financial donates $3K ETC to NMC Foundation Golf Open

In support of higher education in the CNMI, Express Financial donated $3,000 to the Northern Marianas College Foundation.

The donation was made in conjunction with the upcoming 13th Annual NMC Foundation Open golf tournament scheduled for April 30 at the LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort.

"The NMC Foundation Board would like to extend its sincere appreciation to Express Financial and branch manager James Matsumoto for their donation to this year's 13th annual NMC Foundation Open golf tournament. We are grateful for their support and involvement in the growth and development of the Northern Marianas College," said NMC Foundation Board member Mary Tenorio.

"We are extremely grateful for Express Financial's donation and continued support of the College and the NMC Foundation," said NMC acting president David Attao.

The NMC Foundation is composed of community volunteers committed to the advancement of opportunities in support of higher education for people in the CNMI. The golf tournament is the NMC Foundation's signature event that raises funds to support NMC's academic programs and services.

The golf tournament will be held at the LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort (West Course) with a shotgun start at 7am and will follow a medal play format. There will be six separate flight categories: Championship, A, B, C, Seniors, and Ladies.

The entrance fee is $100 per player. Payments for the entrance fee can be made at LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort, and the NMC Cashier.

For more information on how to donate to the NMC Foundation or to register to play, log on to www.marianas.edu or call 237-6780. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Express Financial branch manager James Matsumoto, third from right, presents a $3,000 check donation to the NMC Foundation for the 13th Annual NMC Foundation Golf tournament, which is set for April 30, 2016, at the Saipan Laolao Bay Golf & Resort.

Koblerville residents to experience water interruption

Commonwealth Utilities Corp. customers in Koblerville are currently experiencing an emergency water service interruption due to a leak on the 4-inch water main located at the discharged site of the Koblerville booster pump station.

Water Operations Personnel discovered the leak when conducting leak detection services

throughout the area over the weekend. Repairs are anticipated to be completed later today and customers in the affected area should expect restoration of services at 6pm.

For more information, contact the CUC Customer Call Center (664'4282) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/). ***(PR)***

PDM Promoters collect 840 lbs of trash

PDM Promoters filled their trash bags with 840 lbs of trash during their monthly cleanup of Paseo De Marianas and its surrounding environs last Saturday, March 19.

Coordinator Sonia Siwa said a total of eight Kinpachi Restaurant staff and 24 members of the Saipan Awaodori Team took part in the monthly cleanup that encompassed Coral Tree Avenue, Winchell's Road, Beach Road, AMP Road, and, of course, Paseo de Marianas.

The cleanup lasted from 9:30am to 11am.

PDM Promoters is a community group also known for its support of the cultural dance group, the Saipan Awaodori Team, as well as keeping the Paseo de Marianas spick and span throughout the year.

The group's monthly cleanups collect up to 1,000 lbs of trash during these drives. TSL Foundation, DFS Galleria Saipan, and Docomo Pacific are the major corporate supporters of PDM Promoters. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Members of the Saipan Awaodori Team took part in the monthly cleanup of the Paseo de Marianas last Saturday.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Volunteers from Kinpachi Restaurant and the Saipan Awaodori Team pose with PDM Promoters members after they collected 840 lbs of trash during their monthly cleanup of the Paseo de Marianas last Saturday.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan Awaodori Team joined hands with Kinpachi Restaurant staff during the March cleanup of the Paseo de Marianas.

Blue Marianas Produxctions gets tips from IT&E

Blue Marianas Produxctions members pose after a field trip at the Joeten Kiyu Public Library where they listened to IT&E executives.

Marianas High School Junior Achievement company, Blue Marianas Produxctions, picked up some tips from IT&E during a recent field trip to the Joeten Kiyu Public Library.

"It's a really great opportunity to meet some of the directors and managers of IT&E CNMI. As business mentors they shared successes and trials to help us to figure out a lot of important things in running a business," Blue Marianas Produxctions said in a statement.

IT&E shared techniques in the business industry and also discussed how to ensure customer satisfaction and how to retain customers.

"For example, we learned that listening is one of the most important things to ensure that our customers are happy with our event hosting services. It's expected that some might have complaints. One of the best ways to satisfy them is to listen to them to find a way to resolve that problem and still retain their connection to our business program. As young achievers we must always be polite, open to everyone, and portray generosity," said the MHS Junior Achievement company.

To cap off the field trip to the public library, MHS Junior Achievement's JA Human Resources committee held a team building activity.

"It was really fun and helpful because we had a chance to know each other and build connections as a student body and business that will definitely help in our future endeavors. Our newfound friendships is the key to happiness as we entrepreneur together. Our happiness not our profits is our success," said Blue Marianas Produxctions. ***(PR)***

Blue Marianas Produxctions members gesture with the peace sign during a break in their discussion with IT&E executives.

Pacific Community assists Fiji's post-cyclone surveys

SUVA, Fiji—Two interdisciplinary teams of oceanographers and damage assessment specialists from the Pacific Community (SPC) will depart to conduct a weeklong survey of the impacts of tropical cyclone Winston on the island of Ovalau and the southern coast of Vanua Levu.

Funded by the World Bank and planned in collaboration with Fiji's National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and Mineral Resources Department, these surveys by SPC's Geoscience Division will assess damage to buildings, the status of water and sanitation, and the extent of coastal inundation in these areas following the devastating category 5 cyclone.

"Surveys like this are important because they provide both short and long-term insights," SPC's Geoscience Division director, Professor Michael Petterson, said.

"In the short term, we can assist the government to see what needs to be replaced and help estimate the costs of rebuilding.

"In the longer term, we can gain a better understanding of the impacts of events like this, helping communities know how to build back safer and stronger, and improve future coastal planning to minimize impacts," Petterson said.

Findings from these surveys will be fed directly into Fiji Government discussions and plans to recover, rebuild, and rehabilitate these areas.

The surveyors will cover the southern corridor of Vanua Levu from Nabouwalu to Loa and the coast of Ovalau Island in the Lomaiviti Group. These locations were selected because initial post-cyclone images show that the storm tide contributed significantly to coastal inundation and damage to infrastructure.

It is hoped that similar surveys can be conducted in other areas that have been severely impacted by inundation, such as Koro Island and Vanua Balavu once the flow of humanitarian assistance slows. Fiji government surveyors are simultaneously organising assessments of the north eastern coast of Viti Levu.

Meanwhile, SPC will also conduct training on Post-Disaster Needs Assessment for Fiji's NDMO, as well as SPC staff, to provide necessary skills refresher for the upcoming nation-wide field surveys. ***(PR)***

Blue Marianas Produxctions members are all smiles outside the Joeten Kiyu Public Library.

Members of Blue Marianas Produxctions, a Marianas High School Junior Achievement company, listen to IT&E executives during a field trip at the Joeten Kiyu Public Library.

Reforest Fiji seedlings contribute to Cyclone Winston recovery

SUVA, Fiji—The Pacific Community (SPC) and the European Union (EU), through their joint initiative, Reforest Fiji, are making available more than 250,000 tree seedlings to help affected Fijian communities recover from tropical cyclone Winston.

The tree seedlings comprise different species, including Teak, Mahogany, Caribbean Pine, Eucalyptus, and Acacia, among others. They were propagated in nurseries in northwest Viti Levu, with the original purpose of helping vulnerable groups, mainly farmers, to supplement their incomes through the production and sale of tree seedlings and in the establishment of woodlots and commercial tree plantations.

The EU Ambassador to Fiji and the Pacific, Andrew Jacobs, said: "The aim of Reforest Fiji is to alleviate poverty in selected sectors of the sugar cane belt region by providing alternative sources of income, a need that has been exacerbated by the impacts of this powerful cyclone."

"In addition to being valuable sources of timber and providing a boost for livelihoods, the trees will also play a vital role in rehabilitating and restoring degraded lands and forests affected by this disaster," the ambassador said.

This follows the initial allocation of 43,000 fruit and vegetable seedlings to Fiji's Ministry of Agriculture by the EU and SPC earlier this month, through the Improving Key Services to Agriculture (IKSA) initiative.

"Whilst the fruits and vegetable seedlings respond to the short term food security needs of the affected population, Reforest Fiji looks at their medium to long term livelihood needs and income generating opportunities," stressed Jacobs.

Reforest Fiji, through SPC's Land Resources Division, will work with the Ministry of Fisheries and Forests to identify and supply seedlings to the priority areas for reforestation.

"Technical advice and assistance will be provided to ensure that the most suitable tree species are planted in different sites in the targeted areas, and that they're maintained in the best possible manner," the Pacific Community director-general Dr. Colin Tukuitonga said.

Tukuitonga and Jacobs toured Viti Levu's north-west together just days after tropical cyclone Winston to meet with project staff and discuss options for offering practical assistance.

Focused on the sugarcane belt of Viti Levu, the Reforest Fiji project will also be establishing trees to protect environmentally sensitive areas, including ridges and stream banks.

In a video message released today for International Day of Forests (21 March) and World Water Day (22 March), Dr Tukuitonga stressed the importance of forests in safeguarding our health, environment and livelihoods as well as the collective responsibility to act now to protect this vital resource. The video can be viewed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KLv4UV1YCJs. ***(PR)***

Business

Experts: Toyota, GM settlements window to Volkswagen case

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Hundreds of millions of dollars in settlements and fines over unintended acceleration in Toyotas and faulty ignition switches in General Motors' vehicles provide a glimpse of what consumers and the government might get from Volkswagen for cheating on diesel emissions, legal scholars say.

But the Volkswagen case comes with a wild card that could significantly drive up damages: The company's admission in September that it intentionally defeated emissions tests and put dirty vehicles on the road.

"It was fraudulent deception, and that makes the case susceptible to a very substantial punitive damage award," said Robert Rabin, a professor at Stanford Law School and expert in product defect cases.

A more immediate concern for Volkswagen may be how to bring nearly 600,000 diesel cars polluting U.S. roads into compliance with emissions standards. A federal judge last month gave the company until Thursday to report back on whether it has come up with an engineering fix. "It seems to me six months is long enough to determine whether or not there is an engineering process that can be utilized by Volkswagen and would be acceptable to the United States government," Senior U.S. District Court Judge Charles Breyer said.

But even with a fix, the company still faces lawsuits by angry Volkswagen owners and the Department of Justice. The owners were duped into buying the vehicles with promises that they were high-performing and fuel efficient yet still environmentally friendly, attorneys for hundreds of owners said in a consolidated complaint filed in February. The suit seeks class action status on behalf of all owners of affected vehicles across the country and demands that Volkswagen buy the vehicles back.

AP

In this Oct. 5, 2015, file photo, the VW sign of Germany's Volkswagen car company is displayed at the building of a company's retailer in Berlin.

The DOJ is asking for civil penalties that could exceed $18 billion. Both cases are before Breyer after a judicial panel decided to consolidate suits against the car company in San Francisco in part because there are so many Volkswagen dealers and owners in California. Volkswagen and its executives could also face separate criminal charges.

"VW in my mind is a numbers game. The only question is how much they pay, not whether they'll pay," said Morris Ratner, a former plaintiffs' attorney who teaches at the University of California, Hastings College of the Law. Ratner once was a partner at the law firm handling the consolidated Volkswagen complaint, but is no longer associated with it.

Ratner cautioned that Volkswagen owners may not get the full vehicle refund they are looking for, pointing to the Toyota unintended acceleration case as an example.

Apple's latest product event isn't causing a big stir

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—It wouldn't be an Apple event without some hoopla. But the company's upcoming product announcement on Monday doesn't seem to be stirring much passion.

Apple has invited tech reporters and analysts to its Silicon Valley headquarters, where CEO Tim Cook is expected to unveil some new additions to its current family of iPhone and iPad devices. So far, however, there have been no hints of any dramatic announcements, such as last year's highly anticipated Apple Watch debut, or major initiatives like the company's long-rumored but yet-to-materialize streaming TV service.

Apple could use a shot in the arm. IPhone sales are levelling off, after surging last year to record levels that made Apple the world's biggest company by stock market value. And many are wondering if Cook can come up with another big hit.

And the very next day, Apple is set to square off in court against the FBI over its demand that the company help it unlock a mass shooter's encrypted iPhone. While that dispute has drawn heated rhetoric, most Apple watchers say it's unlikely to play a major role at Monday's product launch.

"There's been a lot less noise" around Monday's event, compared with similar gatherings in the past, said Gartner tech analyst Brian Blau. Even so, he cautioned against ruling out any surprises. "Apple is such a secretive company. They do keep things under wraps as long as possible."

While Apple has been mum about its plans, several analysts expect the company will introduce an upgrade to its older, four-inch iPhone 5S—aimed at consumers who haven't sprung for the bigger-screen iPhone 6 models that Apple introduced two years ago. The new phone may come with features like Apple Pay and the company's fastest processor, which have previously been offered only on versions of the iPhone 6.

Tell cussing colleague to clean up his language

YOUR OFFICE COACH

By MARIE G. MCINTYRE
McClatchy-Tribune News Service

Marie G. McIntyre is a workplace coach and the author of Secrets to Winning at Office Politics*. Send in questions and get free coaching tips at http://www.yourofficecoach.com, or follow her on Twitter @ officecoach.*

Q: I have a co-worker who curses loudly whenever he gets upset. "Nick" uses highly offensive language describing various sexual acts and bodily functions. Because we work in a large cubicle farm with five-foot walls, Nick's ranting can be clearly heard by everyone. To make it worse, customers routinely pass through this area on their way to meetings.

I have personally warned Nick that his salty language could get him in trouble, and others have talked to him as well. Each time, Nick tones it down for a couple of days, but then the swearing starts up again. Should I keep trying to convince him or just give up?

A: Nick's obscene outbursts would be inappropriate under any circumstances, but the fact that customers witness these tirades makes them an even more serious problem. Since confronting Nick directly seems to have no effect, it's time to have a talk with his manager. If possible, take along a colleague to verify your observations.

For example: "We're afraid that Nick may be giving customers a negative impression of our department. Whenever he gets upset, he begins yelling obscenities which many of us find offensive. If a customer were to complain, that would make us all look bad, so we would appreciate your talking to him about this."

If you are reluctant to rat out your cursing colleague, remember that you may actually be doing him a favor. A customer complaint to higher management would undoubtedly produce much more dire consequences.

Q: One of my employees is married to my boss. Because "Sarah" has difficulty with certain tasks, I reorganized my group to compensate for her shortcomings. When my manager learned that I had changed Sarah's duties, he got angry and said I should have talked with him first. I felt that involving him would be a conflict of interest. Should my manager participate in decisions about his wife?

A: Sadly, this is where we learn the difference between how things should be and how they really are. In an ideal world, you could manage your boss's wife like any other employee. But in reality, unless you wish to commit political suicide, you should consult him about any move which may upset her. Otherwise, he'll get an earful at home, then share the pain with you at work.

That being said, you should never have been put in this awkward position. Supervising a close relative of the boss is virtually impossible, so well-managed organizations prohibit these arrangements. When such configurations are unavoidable, as in a small family-owned business, there should be a clear understanding of how these convoluted relationships are going to operate.

Unfortunately, as your dilemma illustrates, those conversations typically never happen. So if you're stuck in this uncomfortable situation for the foreseeable future, ask your manager what role he prefers to have in issues affecting his wife, then abide by those wishes. At the very least, this will save you the embarrassment of having your decisions overridden.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Gas prices jump by 17 cents over past 2 weeks, to $2.02

CAMARILLO, Calif. (AP)—The average price of gasoline has jumped by 17 cents over the past two weeks, to $2.02 a gallon for regular grade. Industry analyst Trilby Lundberg said Sunday that the hike is due to growing demand for gasoline across the nation and higher crude oil prices. Lundberg says the increase is part of a trend that has seen the price spike nearly a quarter over four weeks. In the Lower 48 states, the highest average price of regular gasoline was $2.72 per gallon in Los Angeles. The lowest was $1.66 in Newark, New Jersey. The U.S. average diesel price is $2.15 per gallon, up about 9 cents from two weeks ago.

Swedish police investigate large cyber-attacks against media

HELSINKI (AP)—Swedish police say they are investigating major cyber attacks against some of the country's leading media companies. Police spokesman Anders Ahlqvist says investigators are unsure about the extent of the denial of service attacks on Saturday but were working closely with security police on the probe. He said some attacks appeared to last for several hours. Swedish news agency TT reported that hackers hit about a dozen media outlets, including websites of the the main dailies and tabloids. Ahlqvist said Sunday that some of the IP addresses used by hackers were Russian but that "doesn't mean Russian operators were behind them."

California to implement income cap on green car rebates

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—California's rebate program for electric vehicles will soon cut off higher-income green car buyers. The program is implementing an income cap starting on March 29, the Sacramento Bee reported Saturday (http://bit.ly/1Uuah5j). Single tax filers who earn $250,000 will not qualify for rebates on plug-in hybrid electric vehicles and battery electric vehicles. The income cap rises to $340,000 for head-of-household filers and $500,000 for joint filers. The changes come as critics have accused the rebate program of being a subsidy for the rich. Meanwhile, low- and moderate-income residents will be eligible for an additional $1,500 in rebates. California Air Resources Board Chairwoman Mary Nichols said the increase will help to ensure that more drivers in communities most impacted by air pollution can benefit from clean vehicles.

Nation

Obama arrives in Cuba for what he calls a 'historic visit'

HAVANA (AP)—Stepping into history, President Barack Obama opened an extraordinary visit to Cuba on Sunday, eager to push decades of acrimony deeper into the past and forge irreversible ties with America's former adversary.

"This is a historic visit and a historic opportunity," Obama said as he greeted staff of the new U.S. Embassy in Havana.

Air Force One touched down on a rainy, overcast day in the Cuban capital. The president was joined by wife Michelle Obama and daughters Malia and Sasha.

Obama was greeted by top Cuban officials—but not President Raul Castro. The Cuban leader frequently greets major world figures upon their arrival at Jose Marti International Airport, but was absent on the tarmac. Instead, he planned to greet Obama on Monday at the Palace of the Revolution.

Obama's whirlwind trip is a crowning moment in his and Castro's ambitious effort to restore normal relations between their countries. While deep differences persist, the economic and political relationship has changed rapidly in the 15 months since the leaders vowed a new beginning.

AP

President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama greet children and families of U.S. embassy personnel during an event at the Melia Habana Hotel in Havana, Cuba, Sunday, March 20, 2016.

After greeting embassy staff, Obama and his family toured Old Havana by foot, despite a heavy downpour. They walked gingerly on the slippery wet stones in the square in front of the Havana Cathedral. A few hundred people gathered in the square erupted in applause and shouted Obama's name as the first family stepped forward

The Obamas then dined at a privately-owned restaurant in a bustling, working class neighborhood. Jubilant crowds surged toward the president's heavily fortified motorcade as it inched through the San Cristobal restaurant.

For more than 50 years, Cuba was an unimaginable destination for a U.S. president, as well as most American citizens. The U.S. severed diplomatic relations with Cuba in 1961 after Fidel Castro's revolution sparked fears of communism spreading to the Western Hemisphere. Domestic politics in both countries contributed to the continued estrangement well after the Cold War ended.

"He wanted to come to Cuba with all his heart," 79-year-old Odilia Collazo said in Spanish as she watched Obama's arrival live on state television. "Let God will that this is good for all Cubans. It seems to me that Obama wants to do something good before he leaves."

Ahead of Obama's arrival, counter-protesters and police broke up an anti-government demonstration by the Ladies in White group, whose members were taken into custody by female police officers in a scene that plays out in Havana each Sunday. They're typically detained briefly and then released.

Obama's visit was highly anticipated in Cuba, where workers furiously cleaned up the streets in Old Havana and gave buildings a fresh coat of paint ahead of his arrival. American flags were raised alongside the Cuban colors in parts of the capital, an improbable image for those who have lived through a half-century of bitterness between the two countries.

Many Cubans stayed home in order to avoid extensive closures of main boulevards. The city's seaside Malecon promenade was largely deserted Sunday morning except for a few cars, joggers, fishermen and pelicans.

Amid cycling boom, penalties for errant drivers remain light

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP)—When Iowa's largest city joined the boom in urban cycling, work crews painted more bike lanes, erected traffic signals especially for cyclists and installed rental bikes at self-service stands that catered to commuters and tourists alike.

In Des Moines and scores of other U.S. cities, the efforts drew bike riders onto busy streets that were once the sole province of cars and trucks. The changes also heightened the risk of serious collisions like the one that threw Ken Sherman from his bicycle with such force that his body tore off the vehicle's side mirror.

Cyclists are frustrated that the growing support for two-wheeled transportation has only rarely led to tougher penalties for drivers who hit bikes, many of whom are never ticketed or receive only minor citations, even in accidents that permanently disable or kill cyclists. The motorist who hit Sherman was deemed to be at fault but was never charged with any wrongdoing.

"I was upset and outraged," said Sherman, who suffered a punctured lung and broke his shoulder blade and collarbone. "I've wanted to get my arms around the laws we have and how they're being enforced."

After his 2009 crash, he joined a bicycling association and began lobbying the Iowa Legislature for changes.

Concerns about cycling safety have risen along with ridership. Bicycle commuting nationwide climbed 62 percent from 2000 to 2013, according to a census survey. In cities such as Chicago, San Francisco and Washington, it shot up by more than 300 percent.

Studies show that having more bicyclists on the road can actually improve overall safety by making motorists more aware of riders. But the increase in cycling has coincided with a 6.6 percent rise in injuries from car-bike crashes and a 1.5 percent increase in deaths between 2001 and 2013, according to the National Traffic Safety Administration. In 2013, 743 cyclists died in crashes with cars, and an estimated 48,000 cyclists were injured.

Police: Ex-trooper kills 2 in turnpike holdup, is shot dead

FORT LITTLETON, Pa. (AP)—A retired state trooper killed a turnpike toll collector and a security guard in a holdup attempt at a toll plaza and then was shot dead by troopers while trying to escape with the money, authorities said.

Clarence Briggs, who retired four years ago, confronted two Pennsylvania Turnpike toll collectors with a handgun on Sunday morning at the Fort Littleton toll plaza in Dublin Township, 65 miles west of Harrisburg, the state capital, police said. Briggs ordered both into an adjoining office and tried to tie them up but fled after a struggle, they said. Both employees left the building as a fare collection vehicle arrived and a security guard emerged, they said.

Briggs then shot and killed one of the toll collectors, Danny Crouse, who had been on the job for less than three months, and Ronald Heist, a retired York police officer who was employed by a detective agency and was working as turnpike security, Capt. David Cain said.

Briggs then fired at the fare collection vehicle, Cain said, and after the driver fled he jumped into the vehicle and drove it to his car, which was parked at the end of a service ramp a few hundred yards away. He started unloading money from the collection vehicle, Cain said.

Troopers arrived within minutes, and the first trooper exchanged shots with Briggs, who was wounded and died at the scene, police said.

Briggs, who was from Newville, retired in January 2012 from the Newville station of Troop T in Cumberland County, which is part of the turnpike system. Cain, the commander of Troop T, said it was possible Briggs had been waiting for the collection vehicle, but he declined to comment on whether an investigation was focusing on the retired trooper's familiarity with turnpike operations and collection procedures.

Turnpike chairman Sean Logan vowed at a news conference at a turnpike maintenance facility in Shade Gap that officials would "expend whatever resources necessary and make sure we find out exactly what transpired this morning and to make absolutely certain that our system is secure and that our employees are protected."

Logan said such an event had happened only "a handful of times" in the 75-year history of the turnpike, which extends 360 miles across the state.

In Mississippi, retiring officials can pocket campaign cash

JACKSON, Miss. (AP)—When former Mississippi Lt. Gov. Amy Tuck shut down her campaign committee in the closing days of 2013, she took a parting gift—the $158,342 remaining in the account.

Tuck had already withdrawn more than $103,000 from the account in late 2007 and early 2008, as she was going to work at Mississippi State University as special assistant to the president, initially making $160,000 a year.

She's hardly the only Mississippi official to cash out at the end of her career. An Associated Press review shows that of 99 elected officials who have left office in recent years, as many as 25 may have pocketed more than $1,000 when they closed their campaign accounts.

At least four others besides Tuck—who is now vice president of campus services at Mississippi State and didn't respond to the AP's requests for comment—took more than $50,000.

Mississippi is one of five states where withdrawals are legal so long as state and federal income taxes are paid, with no restrictions on how it's spent. A proposal to end the practice has consistently failed to win support from lawmakers, dying again this year without even a committee vote.

Experts say the practice makes campaign contributions perilously close to bribes.

"Your office is a public office and you should not benefit from it. You are personally gaining from your political office, and that is why they're giving to you. That's the fear," said Larry Noble, general counsel of the Campaign Legal Center, a Washington-based group that seeks to reduce the influence of money in politics.

Tuck, a community college teacher who was raised by country store owners, wasn't wealthy. She faced scrutiny for taking loans, including $500,000 from well-known tobacco settlement attorney Richard "Dickie" Scruggs that she later repaid.

Asia

PH presidential debate erupts in heated exchanges

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A Philippine presidential debate erupted into heated exchanges Sunday over allegations of corruption, a lack of patriotism and incompetence hurled against the leading candidates in a tight race to lead their poor and divided nation.

The second of three debates, held in the central Philippines' vote-rich Cebu province, aimed to shift the public's focus toward policy debate and programs to confront social ills. The four main contenders in the May 9 elections, however, often used the nationally televised debate to exchange personal attacks.

President Benigno Aquino III ends his six-year term in June. Under Aquino, the economy has been growing steadily but daunting challenges remain, including corruption and poverty, issues that figured prominently in Sunday's three-hour debate.

Among the first to square off were Sen. Grace Poe, who has led in pre-poll surveys, and Vice President Jejomar Binay. Poe sniped at Binay for failing to attend a Senate inquiry into allegations of large-scale corruption against him when he was still mayor of the financial district of Makati city.

Binay lashed back by questioning Poe's love of her country because she once renounced her Filipino citizenship and became a U.S. citizen to live with her family in the United States.

"You always say you're a true Filipino, but how can you be one when you took an oath to become an American and you abjured, you were ashamed of where you came from," Binay said.

Elections officials disqualified Poe from running for president last December, saying she was not a natural-born Filipino as the constitution requires of presidential candidates and did not have the 10-year residency requirement ahead of the elections. Poe brought her case to the Supreme Court, which ruled this month that she was eligible to run.

Mayor Rodrigo Duterte of southern Davao city, who is known for his tough stance against criminality and corruption, challenged Binay to withdraw from the presidential race with him if the vice president can prove that Duterte has been charged with graft.

"I'd like to be very, very brutally frank to the vice president. Sir, you have so many cases ... that's public knowledge," Duterte said.

Chinese governor's false claims shows practice of deception

BEIJING (AP)—A Chinese governor's rare admission of having given a misleading account about the plight of coal miners has prompted new laments among the public about pervasive deception practiced by China's bureaucracy, with even state media calling on officials to be more truthful.

Heilongjiang Gov. Lu Hao's assertion that 80,000 miners at his province's largest mining company had been fully paid triggered an angry protest by the workers. The governor soon backtracked and pledged to pay back wages.

His candor won some applause, but it also reignited questions online and even in state media about how he could have been so easily misinformed on such an important matter.

"There's hardly any thread of authenticity these days in the reports from subordinates to their supervisors in the government, and the superiors shall by no means believe any of those reports," wrote Hua Yuxi, a Chinese blogger. "Their statistics, their work summaries, and their achievements are all fully inflated."

The incident came just months after the state-run Xinhua News Agency reported that officials in China's northeast admitted they had inflated economic data, apparently to meet targets and impress their superiors.

In one case, a county in Liaoning province inflated its fiscal revenue by 847 million yuan ($131 million) for 2013, state auditors reported last year. Xinhua said local governments had cooked the books to cover up fabricated data on everything from economic growth to investments, consumption, trade, urban projects and urban incomes, before investigators and cooperating officials uncovered the scam.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Mudslide buries 8 students in northern Pakistan

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (AP)—A mudslide on a hilly track buried eight teenage students returning home after exams in northern Pakistan after several days of heavy rain, officials said Sunday. The spokesman for the local disaster management authority, Latifur Rehman, said the incident occurred Saturday in the village of Susam, near the Afghan border. More than a week of rains across northern Pakistan and other parts of the country has caused 79 deaths and at least 100 injuries in mudslides and house collapses. Rehman said the district administration was working with the army, police and paramilitary forces to recover the bodies of the eight students, who are presumed dead. He said two bodies have been recovered so far but ongoing heavy rain was hampering the rescue efforts.

Indonesian military helicopter crashes, killing 12

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—An Indonesian military helicopter has crashed during a mission to capture the country's most wanted militant, killing at least 12 people. The military chief overseeing South Sulawesi and Central Sulawesi provinces, Maj. Gen. Agus Surya Bakti, says the Bell 412-EP helicopter was carrying 13 soldiers and crew when it went down late Sunday in Poso district, about 35 minutes after taking off from Watutau village in Central Sulawesi. He says rescuers spotted the wreckage of the burning helicopter in a remote area of Kasiguncu village. Authorities are investigating what caused the crash.

Bird stops roller coaster, leaves riders hanging upside down

BEIJING (AP)—Roller-coaster riders at one of Beijing's major amusement parks were left hanging upside down for almost 20 minutes when a bird stood on one of the ride's safety sensors. The Happy Valley Amusement Park in the Chinese capital said it took 18 minutes to bring the 26 riders to safety during the incident on Saturday afternoon. The roller coaster was back in operation later in the day. The park said in a statement that a bird had landed on the sensor and in doing so activated an emergency procedure, immediately stopping the roller coaster as it traveled upward. Ironically, the Happy Valley park describes the ride on its website as "the feeling of flying like a bird."

World

Russia: Black boxes from plane crash site are badly damaged

ROSTOV-ON-DON, Russia (AP)—Aviation experts on Sunday began examining the black boxes from the FlyDubai flight that crashed amid high winds at an airport in southern Russia, killing all 62 aboard.

Russian Police and Emergency Ministry employees investigate the wreckage of a crashed plane at the Rostov-on-Don airport, about 950 kilometers (600 miles) south of Moscow, Russia, Sunday, March 20, 2016. AP

FlyDubai's Boeing 737-800 from Dubai nosedived and exploded in a giant fireball before dawn Saturday after trying to land for a second time in strong winds in the Russian city of Rostov-on-Don. FlyDubai confirmed all 62 people on the plane were killed. Most of the passengers were Russian.

Several planes had trouble landing at the airport at the time of the crash.

The Inter-State Aviation Committee said in a statement that the plane's data and voice recorders had been heavily damaged in the crash.

But Sergei Zaiko, deputy chairman of the committee, was quoted by Russian news agencies late Sunday as saying that the quality of material on the data recorder was high.

The black boxes were being viewed in Moscow by experts from Russia, the United Arab Emirates and France, the aviation commission said. The American-made Boeing plane had French-made engines.

At Rostov-on-Don, hundreds of people flocked Sunday to the airport, the region's largest, to lay flowers and leave candles and toys in memory of the dead. The city is 950 kilometers (600 miles) south of Moscow near the Ukrainian border.

Migrants keep arriving in Greece despite deal to return them

ATHENS, Greece (AP)—Hundreds of mostly Syrian asylum-seekers continued to arrive in Greece by sea Sunday despite the start of an international agreement to send migrants back to Turkey.

While the deal between the European Union and Turkey is officially in effect, the process for deporting migrants has yet to be worked out. Greek and Turkish officials are set to hold discussions on Monday. And Greece is still awaiting the arrival of 2,300 European experts, including translators, to help carry out the agreement.

In the meantime, the EU said any new arrivals in Greece from now on will be subject to possible deportation.

At least 875 new refugees—mostly Syrians, along with Iraqis and Afghans—landed on four of Greece's Aegean islands close to the Turkish coast between Saturday evening and daybreak Sunday. Two Syrian men were found dead of undetermined causes aboard a boat arriving on the island of Lesbos, and two girls were found drowned east of Rhodes, officials said.

The EU-Turkey plan, agreed to on Friday, aims to halt smuggling by sending migrants who do not qualify for asylum back to Turkey. As part of the deal, European nations will then accept refugees directly from Turkey, starting April 4. The hope is to discourage asylum-seekers from trying to make the dangerous trip across the Aegean Sea on their own in flimsy boats.

Turkey is also required to step up efforts to crack down on illegal migration. The deal puts Ankara on the fast track to get $6.6 billion in aid to deal with refugees on its territory. It could also lead to unprecedented visa concessions for Turks to visit Europe and a re-energizing of the country's EU membership bid.

Spain bus crash kills 13 exchange students; 34 injured

MADRID (AP)—A bus carrying university exchange students back from Spain's largest fireworks festival crashed Sunday on a main highway in the northeast, killing at least 13 passengers and injuring 34 others, officials said.

The passengers included Spaniards and foreign nationals from around 20 countries, authorities said.

The bus, which was carrying 57 passengers, appeared to have hit a guardrail of the AP7 highway before cartwheeling across the road, slamming through a divider and landing on its side, said Jordi Jane, spokesman for Spain's northeastern Catalonia province.

The students, part of the Erasmus exchange program, had traveled to the eastern city of Valencia to take part in the renowned Fallas fireworks festival and were returning when the bus crashed, Jane said. Most were studying at two universities in Barcelona.

The crash took place near Freginals, halfway between Valencia and Barcelona.

Initially, Jane said 14 had died in the crash, but Spanish Interior Minister Jorge Fernandez Diaz later confirmed the death toll was 13. He said 28 passengers received medical treatment in local hospitals and others received first aid at the crash site.

The regional government of Catalonia said in a statement in the early evening that "according to the latest data, the ill-fated bus had students from Hungary, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Czech Republic, United Kingdom, Italy, Peru, Bulgaria, Poland, Ireland, Japan, Ukraine, Holland, Belgium, France, Palestine, Turkey, Greece."

It added that two countries—New Zealand and Finland—were still pending confirmation.

The statement said autopsies had been completed on nine of the 13 dead and a judge would release the bodies to families once full identification was complete in all cases.

Overdrive

AUTO REVIEW: Ask a cop: 2016 Dodge Charger is one fine ride

By LARRY PRINTZ
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

MCT
Dodge pitches the 2016 Charger as a four-door muscle car, offered in six ascending trim levels.

Say "Dodge Charger" to most motorists, and no doubt they'll think of a police cruiser staked out in the weeds alongside a freeway. The car's use by law enforcement is appropriate; subtly is not in its DNA.

The Charger debuted in 1966 as a two-door version of the mid-sized Coronet sedan. It was soon transformed into a burly muscle car, but those glory days were short-lived. Escalating fuel prices and insurance rates emasculated powerful mid-sized coupes and, by 1983, the Charger was a wimpy, two-door compact powered by a four-cylinder engine.

Thankfully, any notions of four-cylinder Chargers have dissipated in a haze of tire smoke.

For 2016, the Charger is offered in six ascending trim levels: SE, SXT, R/T, R/T Scat Pack, SRT 392 and SRT Hellcat. That may seem hard to remember, but actually, it's not.

The SE is a rental car special, the one dealers will advertise at a low, low price. The SXT is the one you'll want, as it has a longer options list, including some important creature comforts. Both come with a 292-horsepower, V-6 engine and eight-speed automatic transmission. All the other trims come with V-8 engines. As you'd expect, the more you pay, the more charge in your Charger.

So, if you'd like a more powerful V-6 Charger, opt for the SXT and order the Rallye Group appearance package (starting at $595), which boosts horsepower to 300 and adds performance tires, steering-wheel mounted paddle shifters, a different front fascia and a rear spoiler.

Stepping up to the R/T trim nets a 5.7-liter Hemi V-8 engine rated at 370 horsepower and 395 pound-feet of torque. It's good for a 0-60 mph run of less than 6 seconds.

Next is the R/T Scat Pack, which sports a power-bulge aluminum hood with a NACA duct, wider tires, specific exterior trim and, most importantly, a larger 6.4-liter Hemi V-8 rated at 485 horsepower and 475 pound-feet of torque that produces mid-4-second 0-60 mph times. Performance upgrades include red Brembo four-piston front brakes, high-performance suspension, all-season performance tires and standard launch control.

If that's not enough, the SRT 392 gilds the lily with larger tires, huge, 15.4-inch front brakes, Brembo six-piston calipers with two-piece slotted and vented rotors, and SRT-tuned high-performance adaptive damping suspension.

The big cat is the SRT Hellcat, with its 707-horsepower supercharged 6.2-liter Hemi.

And if that paragraph doesn't start you salivating, check your pulse.

Sure, not everyone has the wallet for an all-wheel drive Charger, but that's what makes this car so alluring. Yes, it has the image of a bold, brash bruiser, but it's the car's refined nature and comfortable cabin that make it so rewarding. So while you can get a crazy, hairy-chested Charger, you can also opt for one like the test car, an all-wheel-drive SXT. While it lacked a bit of the more brutal tendencies the more expensive trims offer, its price is very much in line with smaller high-end midsized cars, and this is a full-size car.

But it doesn't handle like one. Turn the wheel, and the car reacts with cat-like reflexes and ridiculous amounts of grip. Cornering behavior is exemplary, with little body lean and a firm-yet-absorbent ride. Throwing it around allows it to dance like a smaller car and it communicates its intentions clearly. The steering is nicely weighted and makes exercising your worst intentions easy to do. Pushing it to its limit brings out some understeer and enough body roll to tell you that you're at this car's extreme. But it's easy to handle.

Of course, if you get in over your head, there's a boatload of optional safety gear, including forward collision warning, adaptive cruise control, lane departure warning with lane keep assist, and a rear backup camera.

Although it doesn't have the necessary G-force to press your major organs against your backbone, the V-6 has more than enough oomph to bring a smile to your lips. Most buyers will find the V-6 a perfect balance of power and fuel economy. And unlike the V-8, which requires midgrade, 89-octane fuel, the V-6 runs on regular unleaded.

And even though you may not have ordered the most fancy Charger, you do get a decent amount of gear, including automatic climate control, a 7-inch infotainment touchscreen, SD, USB and auxiliary plugs, integrated garage door opener, and heated front seats.

The test car added a Premium Group package (starting at $5,995), which is a must-have for any hedonist, with rear-heated seats, front ventilated seats, heated steering wheel, 552-watt Beats premium audio with HD Radio, leather seats, automatic high beam, rain-sensing windshield wipers, memory seats and way more.

It's all stuffed into a cabin that offers expansive seating for four, or five if they're friendly. It's quiet, adding an admirable solidity to this car's feel. Credit should go to the Charger's aging Mercedes-Benz platform. The seats are very comfortable and accommodating for most physiques with just enough side support to hold you in place. Padding lacks the unyielding character increasingly common to all vehicles these days.

Of course, few competitors offer so much swagger, style and size, not to mention performance, in an affordable full-size sedan.

Its intoxicating combination of performance, refinement, style and size is too good and too much to be left for only police officers and their perps to enjoy.

NUTS & BOLTS

2016 Dodge Charger (Figures reflect the test car, an all-wheel-drive SXT with Premium Group appearance package.)

- Base price: $31,995 (test car included Premium Group appearance package, an extra starting at $5,995)
- Engine: 3.6-liter V-6
- Horsepower: 300
- Torque: 264 pound-feet
- Wheelbase: 120.2 inches
- Length: 198.4 inches
- Curb weight: 4,220 pounds
- Cargo capacity: 16.5 cubic feet
- Environmental Protection Agency fuel economy (city/highway): 18/27mpg
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration safety rating: 5 stars

UNDER THE HOOD: Pampered SUV experiencing pre-ignition pinging

By BRAD BERGHOLDT
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Q: I have relied on your advice for many years, and you have always batted 100 percent. So, I would like to request your advice on this one: I own a 2006 Ford Escape V-6 with 35,000 pampered miles on it. On a recent visit to a county park where there are steep inclines, I heard pre-ignition pinging when ascending the hills. It was very noticeable, so I gently drove out of the park. On flat surfaces or slight hills, there is no pinging.

When there was a sound, it was as if someone had put metal clothes hangers in a washing machine and set it to agitate back and forth. I use regular gasoline like the owner's manual says and have never heard any pinging until now. Accelerating quicker than normal on a level surface or slight incline does not produce the pinging. Should I have the timing checked or go to a higher octane gasoline, or could there be another problem?

-- Hal Smith

A: Hal, I think you may have missed a few columns! I've fouled out more than a few times.

Your description of engine pre-ignition (also called pinging) seems a little odd with the weather still being cool. What's happening is the air-fuel mixture in one or more cylinders is self-igniting—due to a heat source or insufficient fuel octane—before the spark plug begins the intended flame front. With 35,000 miles on the clock, I'm guessing the Escape isn't driven a lot. Any chance your fuel is a bit stale? Before digging very deep into this, it might not hurt to repeat the trip with similar or warmer weather and a fresh load of fuel. Also, any problems with the check engine light illuminating?

Ford released service bulletin in August 2006 addressing spark knock, hard start and hesitation symptoms on some '05 and '06 Escapes equipped with the 3.0-liter engine. An updating of the Escape's powertrain control module programming is said to improve performance. Has this already been performed? If not, you appear to be past the emissions warranty period, so this 30 minutes procedure would likely be at your expense.

If you still encounter pre-ignition in spite of the above, I'd start with a check for excessive engine temperature, as combustion chamber heat is what's igniting the air-fuel mix. Ignition timing isn't adjustable on your engine as it's a coil-on-plug system. Spark plugs with a higher heat range than specified could cause this, as well as a lean air-fuel ratio (insufficient fuel or too much air). A vacuum leak affecting one cylinder only or a dirty fuel injector could cause pre-ignition without upsetting the overall air-fuel ratio enough to set a trouble code. Another somewhat difficult-to-identify cause could be a slightly dirty mass airflow sensor. The onboard diagnostic system allows a somewhat wide window of acceptability for this sensor, and engine performance can skew slightly before a code is set.

Your engine is also equipped with an exhaust gas recirculation system, which tries to hold combustion temperatures from becoming excessive. A mid-level to significant fault would be identified by the diagnostic system, but a slightly clogged exhaust passage might sneak past the tests and allow some pre-ignition. Faults that are small enough to fly under the system's radar will be challenging to identify!

Life & Style

Fox: Trump has 'extreme, sick obsession' with Megyn Kelly

WASHINGTON (AP)—Fox News is slamming GOP presidential frontrunner Donald Trump for his repeated Twitter tirades against anchor Megyn Kelly.

"Donald Trump's vitriolic attacks against Megyn Kelly and his extreme, sick obsession with her is beneath the dignity of a presidential candidate who wants to occupy the highest office in the land," the network said in a statement Friday evening.

The statement from spokeswoman Irena Briganti went on to praise Kelly as "an exemplary journalist and one of the leading anchors in America" and said the network will "continue to fully support her throughout every day of Trump's endless barrage of crude and sexist verbal assaults.'"

"As the mother of three young children, with a successful law career and the second highest rated show in cable news, it's especially deplorable for her to be repeatedly abused just for doing her job," it added. Trump campaign spokeswoman Hope Hicks responded Friday evening: "Megyn Kelly is a highly overrated reporter and anchor that constantly disparages Mr. Trump with negative and inaccurate reports. Despite the fact he wants nothing to do with her and will not appear on her show due to her extremely biased reporting, much of the program is about him anyway on a nightly basis."

Trump has been deeply critical of Kelly since an early GOP debate in which Kelly pressed Trump on his past misogynist statements against women. But he began to re-engage Tuesday night, calling her "crazy" and "the most overrated person" on television.

"Everybody should boycott the @megynkelly show. Never worth watching. Always a hit on Trump! She is sick, & the most overrated person on tv," he wrote earlier Friday.

JON PEREZ

Clockwise from left, customers can sample their version of Italian lasagna, charbroiled cheeseburger, and Hawaii's contemporary cuisine Loco Moco at Saipan Food Express.

SAIPAN FOOD EXPRESS

CHOW for the person always on the go

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Food for the person who is always on the go is the target market that the management team behind Saipan Food Express wants to reach. The name says it all, according to food service manager Ernel Rubio—they want a grab-and-go system in serving their food without compromising quality, taste, and safety.

Rubio said they thought of the idea after Typhoon Soudelor hit Saipan on Aug. 2 last year. "There were long lines in some restaurants here on Saipan after Typhoon Soudelor. We wanted to have prepared grab-and-go meals. Packed and ready without neglecting the food's quality."

"It was also borne out of frustration like in some restaurants when dining out, you order value meals that are usually two choices but you get shortchanged with the service and quality," Rubio said.

"We contemplated that we can offer a better service and value meals in a place where the ambience will be enjoyable and relaxing. Customers deserve no less from their hard-earned money."

"We want to make sure that we serve quality food that's fast with improved service. We want to give the best deal to our customers," said Rubio, who has been in the food industry business since he was 6 years old, as his family owned a roadside eatery in Manila, Philippines.

"Some people were born with a silver spoon, I was born with a cooking spatula in my hand," he added with a chuckle.

Rubio, who is also the Food Service manager of Barny's Pizza, one of the leading school food service companies on the island, will implement the same principles on food safety and quality at Saipan Food Express.

The direction from the owners Jimmy Ham, a longtime businessman on the island, and Armela Ham, a former public school teacher, is to give the community a better alternative in terms of value and service, and this will be the mission that the new restaurant will pursue.

Barny's Pizza used to be a restaurant in Susupe, but Rubio said they closed it and decided to concentrate to catering with some public and private schools on Saipan as their clients.

Why decide in opening another restaurant? "We were working full time in serving schools but we believe the timing is also right for opening another restaurant especially with a lot of ongoing construction projects. The CNMI's economy is improving," said Rubio.

They opened their new place at Springs Plaza in Middle Road on Feb. 29—the same facility that houses the offices of the Northern Marianas Humanities Council and the Commonwealth Casino Commission—almost a month since Bank of Hawaii opened its consolidated branch.

"We never knew Bank of Hawaii was going to transfer here at Springs Plaza when we got this place. We were fixing and finishing up construction for our new restaurant, and we're surprised to learn that they transferred here," said Rubio.

It was really a blessing with a lot of Bank of Hawaii's customers going in to sample their menu that changes daily, giving them more choices.

"People who are going to the bank after doing their transactions were also surprised to find out that there's a new restaurant here. Now the bank's customers become our customers, aside from the employees that work in the offices near here," said Rubio.

Aside from Filipino specialties like kare-kare, papaitan, dinuguan (fritada), Saipan Food Express also offers classic Italian lasagna, Hawaii's Loco Moco, U.S. staples like cheeseburgers with a healthy serving of French fries on the side, local favorites like chicken kelaguen, fried parrot fish, barbecue ribs, and of course Barny's pizza delivered hot and fresh.

"Though more on Filipino food, we decided to have fusion food. We're also offering Chamorro, Japanese, and Chinese cuisine in our menu. Mostly popular food," said Rubio. "We also see to it that we offer a variety of vegetable dishes. We want to inject healthy food in our menu and it is specially made for those who are into a healthy lifestyle."

Saipan Food Express also accepts catering services for special occasions and offers delivery service with a minimum order of five bento meals.

Rubio said the concept of Saipan Food Express, highlights the relaxing feel of the beachside, the green color that dominates the place, the design of the chairs and tables, the colorful and inspiring quotes on the walls were chosen so that customers can feel a nice and relaxing ambiance. A huge photo of a clear blue sky on the beach is also plastered in one of their walls.

"We made sure to have a relaxing ambiance for our customers. And we guarantee that our food is safe and of the highest quality," said Rubio.

For reservations or to ask for the day's menu, call 233-3777.

JON PEREZ

Saipan Food Express' two-choice meals come with bottomless iced tea for a reasonable price.

JON PEREZ

Their regular menu includes a vegetable dish made from bottle gourd. Clockwise from top left, are their other dishes squid, chicken kelaguen, beef soup, barbecued ribs, Prawn in tamarind soup, menudo, and beef kaldereta that can be paired with either white or red rice.

'Zootopia' tramples 'Allegiant,' a 'Divergent' series low

AP
This image released by Disney shows Judy Hopps, voiced by Ginnifer Goodwin, left, Nick Wilde, voiced by Jason Bateman, second left, in a scene from the animated film, "Zootopia."

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"Zootopia" continues to run wild over its rivals in its third weekend in theaters, stomping all over the launch of "Allegiant," the third film in the "Divergent" series.

The animated Disney film featuring the voices of Jason Bateman and Ginnifer Goodwin earned $38 million this weekend to take first place once again, according to comScore estimates Sunday. It's now earned $201.8 million domestically.

It stole the thunder from "The Divergent Series: Allegiant," starring Shailene Woodley and Theo James, which opened in second place with an estimated $29.1 million from 3,740 locations.

It's a new low for the YA series based on Veronica Roth's novels, which both opened north of $50 million, but not unexpected. Lionsgate broke up Roth's final book into two movies, the second of which, "Ascendant," launches next year. And, like "Twilight" and "The Hunger Games," it's not unusual for Part 1 of a 2-film finale to fall short of some of its predecessors.

"It's had mixed results in general, but it's also had great results so I can't really fault a studio for going with that strategy," said Paul Dergarabedian, comScore's senior media analyst. "It's like skipping ahead in a book. I think it's a strategy that may want to be reconsidered. But there are other factors—is the movie good? What are the conditions of the marketplace?"

Dergarabedian also noted that fickleness of the teen audience might be playing into the big drop from the previous films.

"They're chasing an audience that is very difficult to pin down," he said. "What might be cool to them one day isn't cool the next."

But while the future of drawn out YA franchises might be looking as bleak as the dystopias they portray, one genre that does seem to produce near-consistent hits is that of the faith-based film.

The latest entry, Sony's "Miracles From Heaven," took third place this weekend with an impressive $15 million. The film, starring Jennifer Garner and Queen Latifah, opened Wednesday. It's earned $18.6 million to date, and cost only $13 million to produce.

Audiences, who were 65 percent female and 75 percent over the age of 25, gave the film an A+ CinemaScore, which bodes well for its longevity going into the Easter holiday weekend.

It's no secret that there have been a slew of faith-based breakout hits, but not many of them have mainstream Hollywood stars on the level of Garner and Latifah.

"These films are a home run in terms of having modest budgets and an audience, but star power does make a difference," Dergarabedian said.

Rory Bruer, Sony's President of Worldwide Distribution, agreed.

"It has a faith-based core, but this movie is for everyone," Bruer said.

Rounding out the top five were holdovers "10 Cloverfield Lane" and "Deadpool" with $12.5 million and $8 million, respectively.

The weekend overall was about on par with last year, but the 2016 box office is thriving, up 10.5 percent from 2015—a number that is likely to rise when "Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice" opens next weekend.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to comScore. Where available, the latest international numbers for Friday through Sunday are also included. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

1. "Zootopia," $38 million ($64.8 million international).
2. "The Divergent Series: Allegiant," $29.1 million ($22 million international).
3. "Miracles From Heaven," $15 million.
4. "10 Cloverfield Lane," $12.5 million ($5 million international).
5. "Deadpool," $8 million ($6.1 million international).
6. "London Has Fallen," $6.9 million ($10 million international).
7. "Whiskey Tango Foxtrot," $2.8 million.
8. "The Perfect Match," $1.9 million.
9. "The Brothers Grimsby," $1.4 million ($2.6 million international).
10. "The Revenant," $1.2 million ($36.4 million international).

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at international theaters (excluding the U.S. and Canada), according to comScore:

1. "Zootopia," $64.8 million.
2. "The Revenant," $36.4 million.
3. "Kung Fu Panda 3," $31.8 million.
4. "The Divergent Series: Allegiant," $22 million.
5. London Has Fallen," $10 million.
6. "Gods of Egypt," $6.2 million.
7. "Deadpool," $6.1 million.
8. " Kapoor & Sons—Sine 1921," $5.9 million.
9. "10 Cloverfield Lane," $5 million.
10. "The Brothers Grimsby," $2.6 million.

Smokey Robinson to receive honor for charitable efforts

AP
In this June 28, 2015, file photo, Smokey Robinson performs at the BET Awards in Los Angeles.

NEW YORK (AP)—Smokey Robinson is getting an award—this time for his charitable efforts.

The icon will be honored on May 19 by the MusiCares MAP Fund, which provides members of the music community access to addiction recovery treatment regardless of their financial situation.

Singers CeeLo Green, Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds, El DeBarge and Kem will perform in honor of Robinson at The Novo in Los Angeles. Tickets go on sale Monday.

Robinson will receive the Stevie Ray Vaughan Award, which was given to Pete Townshend at last year's benefit concert.

The 76-year-old Robinson also will perform at the event, to be hosted by comedian-actor Cedric the Entertainer. Additional performers will be announced at a later date.

'Rockford Files' star Joe Santos dies at 84

AP
In this March 18, 1980 file photo, actor Joe Santos appears on the set of the NBC-TV comedy series "Me and Maxx," in Los Angeles.

NEW YORK (AP)—Joe Santos, who played Lieutenant Dennis Becker on "The Rockford Files," has died at 84.

Santos died Friday in Santa Monica, California, after a heart attack earlier in the week, according to his agent Alicia Beekman.

Santos' career spanned more than four decades, from a guest shot on "Naked City" in the early 1960s through a recurring role on "The Sopranos."

But he was best known as Lieutenant Becker, the pal and grudging helpmate of L.A. private eye Jim Rockford (James Garner) on NBC's "The Rockford Files," which aired from 1974 to 1980 and scored him an Emmy nomination.

The New York-born actor also had guest roles on such series as "Magnum, P.I.," ''Miami Vice" and "Hardcastle & McCormick."

Santos most recently was seen in the 2015 film "Chronic."

Review: Gwen Stefani's new solo album is catchy, but basic

Gwen Stefani's new solo album is fun and catchy: the hooks are cute and likable, the beats will make your head bop and her voice is calm and cool.

But after listening to it, you're on to the next.

"This Is What the Truth Feels Like," Stefani's first solo album in 10 years, isn't memorable or distinctive. It's not that the songs are bad—because they aren't. But they aren't good either. The 12 tracks are an OK batch of pop tunes that don't reveal much about Stefani, the singer or person.

Though the lyrical content of some of the songs is deep, the tracks don't drip with emotion. Instead, the album sounds tailor-made for radio, and the songs lack in both originality and personality—a thing that's usually a specialty of Stefani's.

For all the talk that the album delves into her personal life, it's hard to tell. The content, even when it's about heartbreak and ex-husband Gavin Rossdale, has a bubble-gum feel. It's as if Stefani's hiding behind the songs' beat and hook, and her vocal tonality is on cruise control throughout—whether the subject is heartache or happiness.

"Truth Feels Like" features a number of hit-making producers, including Greg Kurstin (Sia, Pink, Lily Allen), J.R. Rotem (Jason Derulo, "Empire" TV series), Stargate (Rihanna, Ne-Yo) and Mattman & Robin (Taylor Swift, Selena Gomez).

But all of that talent might be the reason the album doesn't rise above average.

The project does have some highlights: "Send Me a Picture," which is likely about boyfriend Blake Shelton, sounds a bit more experimental than the other tracks. "Red Flags" and "Asking 4 It," which features rapper Fetty Wap, are high points, too.

But songs like "Naughty" and the singles "Used to Love You" and "Make Me Like You" don't feel connected to Stefani—it's as if another pop star could sing the tracks and you wouldn't notice the difference. That's disappointing for Stefani, a singer who is usually a stand-out on the pop music scene.

Holla back girl when you make your next album.

Ben Affleck wants to prove he's just another Batman

NEW YORK (AP)—Ben Affleck hopes the Batman fans who were skeptical of him playing the caped crusader in "Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice" realize how seriously he took the role.

"The most difficult thing about making this movie, honestly, was the physical aspect," Affleck told The Associated Press Sunday on the red carpet for the film's New York premiere at Radio City Music Hall.

Affleck said he wanted to be in shape, so he worked out hard.

"Having to be in the gym every day, six in the morning ... I wasn't used to that kind of workout regimen," Affleck said. "Fans have come to expect that if you're going to play a superhero, you got to look in the body like a superhero. I knew the camera was going to be looking at me and the guillotine was there so I knew I had to be ready," he said.

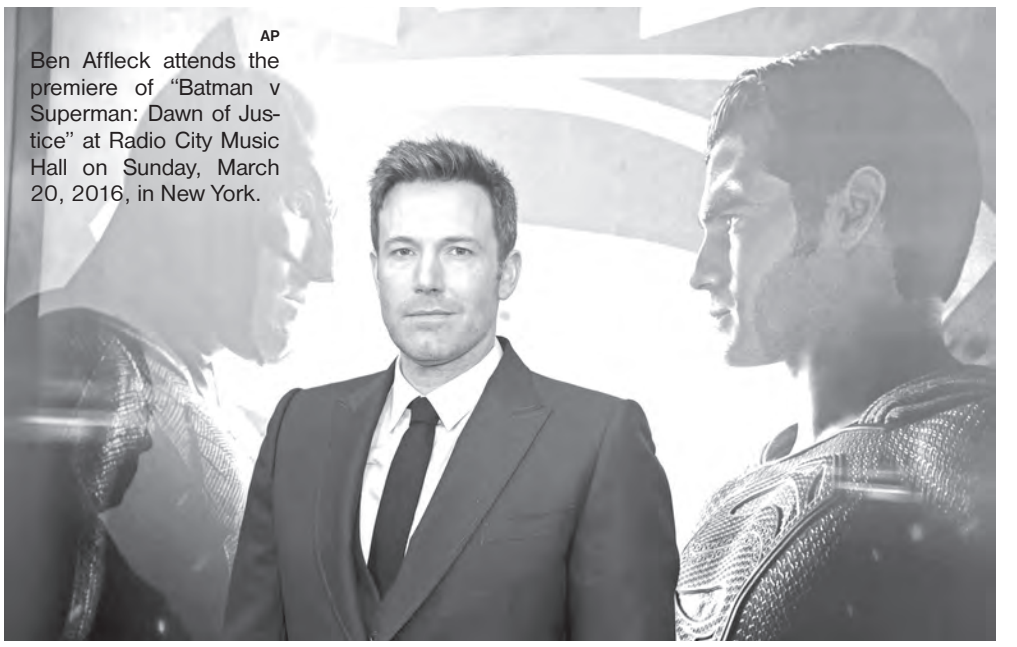
When Warner Bros. made the announcement nearly three years ago that Affleck would play Batman, some fans were less than thrilled, and the backlash led to petitions asking the studio to remove Affleck.

Eventually, it blew over, and the two-time Oscar winner feels proud to be part of the Batman legacy.

"I'm really honored to be part of a tradition that Christian Bale and Christopher Nolan, great talents, worked on. Michael Keaton, Val Kilmer, George Clooney, Tim Burton, great talents. So I just wanted to do my best. I think we did something different, but something that is still very much Batman," Affleck said.

His co-star Jesse Eisenberg shared a similar experience when he was cast in the film as Superman's arch-nemesis, Lex Luthor.

But Eisenberg, famous for his role as Mark Zuckerberg in "The Social Network," empathized with his critics.



AP

Ben Affleck attends the premiere of "Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice" at Radio City Music Hall on Sunday, March 20, 2016, in New York.

Prince Harry visits Nepal quake victims, damaged structures

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP)—Britain's Prince Harry on Sunday visited with families living at a camp in Nepal for people made homeless by last April's devastating earthquake as he continued a trip that many hope will draw attention to Nepal's struggle to recover from the disaster.

Harry talked to families living in the camp at Bhaktapur, just east of the capital, Kathmandu, inquiring about the living conditions. He also spent part of the second day of his five-day official visit to the Himalayan nation at palace and temple areas damaged in the quake.

About 60 families have been living in tents at the Bhaktapur camp for nearly a year and remain uncertain about when they'll receive government assistance to rebuild their houses.

It's just one of the camps scattered around Nepal where people have been forced to live since the earthquake struck, killing nearly 9,000 people and destroying about 1 million homes.

Authorities have been slow to push ahead with quake rebuilding efforts. A government reconstruction agency was finally appointed in December, but has yet to provide promised aid money to displaced families and guidelines to build new houses and structures.

AP

Britain's Prince Harry, left, is welcomed by Nepalese girls during a visit to heritage sites at Patan Durbar Square on the outskirts of Kathmandu, Nepal, Sunday, March 20, 2016.

'House of Cards' star dons 'Spacey Facey' at Panthers game

SUNRISE, Fla. (AP)—On a night that the Florida Panthers handed out cardboard cutouts of actor Keven Spacey's face, the "House of Cards" star surprised fans by taking off his "Spacey Facey" mask as the videoboard camera panned around the stands.

The Academy Award-winning actor attended the game Saturday night in support of the Panthers, wearing a sweatshirt showing an image of his face.

It started as a joke a few months ago, when the Panthers issued a blue sweatshirt with "Spacey In Space"—his face floating in outer space—to the star of each winning game. After a win, that player would then hand the shirt off to someone else.

Spacey, an Oscar winner for "The Usual Suspects" and "American Beauty," caught wind of it through social media. Whatever "Spacey In Space" means remains a mystery; players have kept their fascination with it a closely guarded inside joke.

Unfortunately for the Panthers, they didn't get a chance to award the hoodie Saturday night after their 5-3 loss to the Detroit Red Wings. Spacey visited briefly with the players in their locker room after the game.

AP

Actor Kevin Spacey waves to the fans during an NHL hockey game between the Florida Panthers and the Detroit Red Wings in Sunrise, Fla., Saturday, March 19, 2016.

Parents of teenage cutters must listen and not judge

DEAR READERS: I promised "Heartbroken Mom From Anywhere" (Oct. 5) to print letters from readers offering suggestions about helping her teen daughter, who is a cutter:

DEAR ABBY: I am a 33-year-old woman who has cut for many years, starting early in high school. What concerns me is the mom doesn't completely understand what's going on. Not many people do.

Self-harm is a cry for help from someone who doesn't know how to voice his or her emotions. I, too, was bullied and didn't know how to express the pain I was feeling, so I took it out on my body. Over the years it became my coping mechanism, although an unhealthy one.

Helping someone who is self-harming requires understanding AND A LICENSED PROFESSIONAL to identify the emotions and suggest better ways to express them. One that worked for me was doing puzzles. It was a way to keep my mind and hands busy.

This teen also needs to know she is not alone. Parents need to listen. I cannot stress how important it is for cutters to know someone is there for them with love and no judgment.

KNOWS FROM EXPERIENCE IN MISSOURI

DEAR ABBY: I grew up in a dysfunctional household with abusive parents. When I would cut, it was like I could feel all my pent-up emotions leaking out through the wounds on my legs. The physical pain was bearable and distracted me from everything that was going on in my life, and I would feel a little bit better about myself and a little less desperate.

Cutting is a powerful addiction. Even now, more than 10 years later, when things get bad I feel a compulsion to just make one small cut. What helped me to stop cutting wasn't counseling or medication. It was becoming passionate about active hobbies that allowed me to release my bottled-up feelings and stress and feel good at the same time.

FORMER CUTTER IN MINNESOTA

DEAR ABBY: I have worked in psychiatry for 10 years and have found that some of these children have been sexually molested. Some told their parents and were not believed because it was the mother's boyfriend, a family friend or a relative. Carrying this around is a heavy burden.

Parents need to show the child they will look into the allegation. We should be a safe place for our kids to offload all their fears and insecurities, because we have a duty to protect them from abuse.

IN THE FIELD IN BROOKLYN, N.Y.

DEAR ABBY: I have been a cutter from age 9 to the present —age 22— though now it's less frequent. The biggest mistake my parents and friends made when I was really destructive was forcing me to commit to ultimatums. It turned my cutting into a shameful thing, isolated me and made it impossible to talk about it.

I advise "Heartbroken" to keep talking to her daughter (not nagging) about cutting, bullying, school and things the girl likes. Share activities with her. Take her hiking, bicycling, to museums or movies. Spending time with her is important for distraction and bonding. Physical activity can help depressed individuals feel better.

And she should understand that recovery is never a straight line. There will be hiccups, setbacks and days when it doesn't seem like it will get better. Eventually, with therapy (via counselors, bonding with friends/family, connection with nature/animals) and learning better coping habits, she will improve. Patience and support are imperative.

KYLE IN PENNSYLVANIA

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

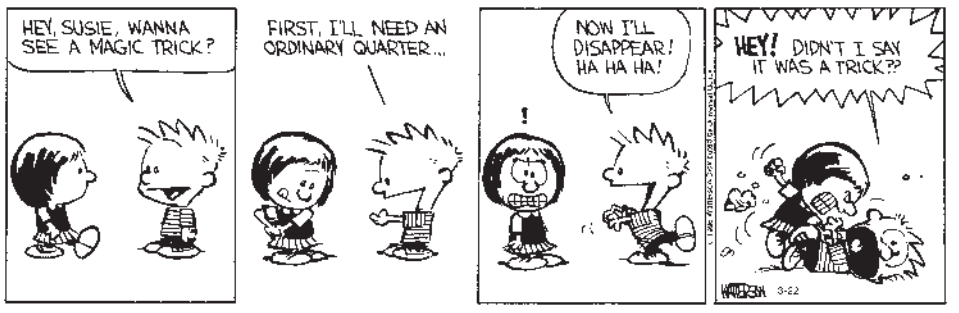
By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

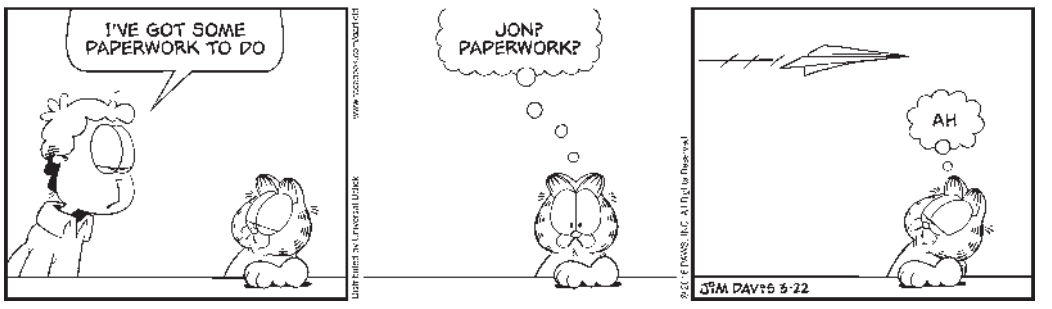
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


HEY, SUSIE, WANNA SEE A MAGIC TRICK?
FIRST, I'LL NEED AN ORDINARY QUARTER...
NOW I'LL DISAPPEAR! HA HA HA!
HEY! DIDN'T I SAY IT WAS A TRICK??

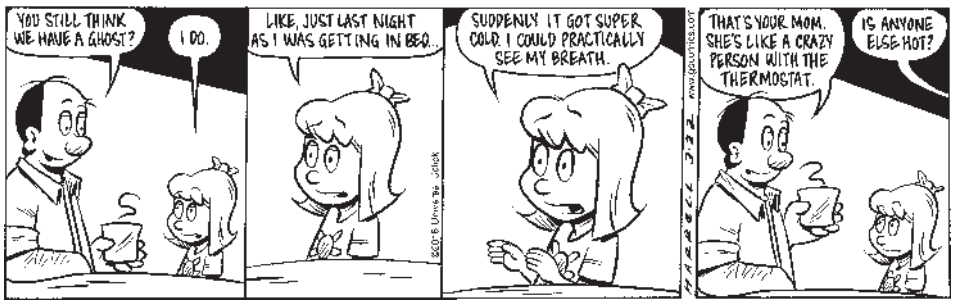
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


YOU STILL THINK WE HAVE A GHOST?
I DO.
LIKE, JUST LAST NIGHT AS I WAS GETTING IN BED...
SUDDENLY IT GOT SUPER COLD. I COULD PRACTICALLY SEE MY BREATH.
THAT'S YOUR MOM. SHE'S LIKE A CRAZY PERSON WITH THE THERMOSTAT.
IS ANYONE ELSE HOT?

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

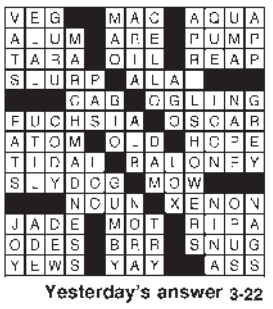
ACROSS

1 Rope fiber
5 — -fi (genre)
8 Luxurious
12 "Got it"
13 Kids' card game
14 Rival rival
15 Eden
17 Caboose's place
18 Seek restitution
19 Wapiti
20 Future oak
21 Crony
22 "Yecch!"
23 Praline nut
26 Prickly shrub
30 Sharif of film
31 Years on end
32 Relaxed
33 Colonnade
35 Ill-deserved
36 "True Detective" airer
37 Potent stick
38 Seraglio
41 Greek cross
42 Yucatan year
45 Actor McGregor
46 Italian cheese
48 Jason's ship
49 "I love," to Livy
50 Missile shelter
51 Pitcher Nolan
52 Convened
53 Bygone despot

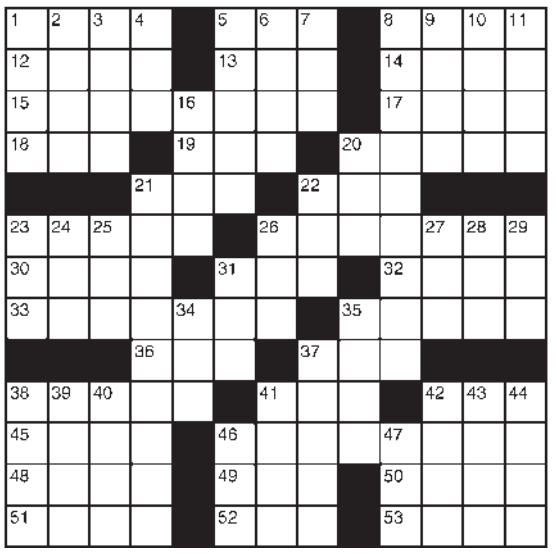
DOWN

1 Swinging joints?
2 Jacob's twin
3 Paltry
4 Royal insomnia cause
5 Sow chow
6 Barrel
7 Wrath
8 Diploma material
9 Margarine
10 Practice pugilism
11 Trumpet
16 Campus advisor
20 — Khan
21 Acropolis temple
22 Samovar
23 Soft drink
24 Comic Philips
25 Ford or Lincoln
26 Scary cry
27 Wicked
28 Baton Rouge sch.
29 Potato part
31 Green prefix
34 "Big Blue" corp.
35 "E pluribus —"
37 Seer's deck
38 Listen to
39 Wrong
40 Sitar music
41 Docile
42 Unrepaired
43 "The Lion King" lioness
44 — about (roughly)
46 Nonstick spray
47 Approx. figure

Solution time: 22 mins.



Yesterday's answer 3-22



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Reese Witherspoon, 40; Elvis Stojko, 44; Bob Costas, 64; William Shatner, 85.

Happy Birthday: Investigate new ways to present your skills. Pick up information that will help improve your resume. Consider what you are doing now and what you would like to be doing by the end of the year. Strive for perfection as well as satisfaction, and you will find your way to a less-stressful life and a happier future. Your numbers are 2, 5, 19, 21, 24, 36, 48.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Don't waffle when it comes to your professional goals. If you want to excel or make a change, take action and make it happen. It's up to you to fuel your own fire and strive to reach your dreams. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Listen to the voice of reason and discuss your plans with someone able to influence your decision and help you make your dreams come true. A joint venture is likely to pay off. Sharing will propel you forward. ✪✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Listen, assess the situation you face and make choices based on what is in your best interest. You cannot give in to emotional manipulation or temptation. If you desire change, make sure your motives are genuine. ✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Surround yourself with creative individuals who will encourage you to explore your own ideas. Make romance and collaboration with others a priority, but don't go into debt trying to keep up with others. ✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Protect against loss or being taken advantage of by someone manipulative. Put more emphasis on personal change, learning and expanding your friendships with those who will help you reach your goals. Take a proactive position when it comes to your beliefs. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Believe in yourself and what you can accomplish. Don't let anyone's negativity hold you back or cause you to underestimate what you are capable of. Offer love and kindness, but don't make sacrifices that will deter your success. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Delve into intriguing situations and look for ways to pursue what fascinates you. Work toward a goal that will impress your peers, employers or teachers. It's up to you to bring about the changes that will improve your life. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): What you put out, you will get back in spades. Don't hesitate to offer suggestions or pitch in to help a cause. Your intuitive intelligence will allow you to shine and motivate others to help you make a difference. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Gather information and be certain before making a move that will have an impact on your reputation. Don't let anyone lead you down a path of temptation. Recognize what is in your best interest. Be willing to say "no." ✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Check over your plans, investments and any upcoming legal or medical procedures. It's always better to be safe and in control. Don't let someone's unexpected changes send you on a wild goose chase. Ride out the storm. ✪✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Make personal changes that will encourage you to look for a job that will bring you a greater sense of satisfaction. Someone or something from your past will help you recognize what you want to see unfold in your life. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Partnerships will pose limitations if you let anger take over. Don't say or do something you'll regret. Treating others with a little love and compassion will improve your situation. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are giving, dependable and committed. You are motivated and inspirational.

*Eugenia's website—**eugenialast.com**, Eugenia's android app @ **http://bit.ly/exhoro** and join Eugenia on **twitter/facebook/linkedin**.*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

5	7				4		9	6
6		9	5			2		8
				1				
7							1	
		8				5		
	2							3
				3				
4		6			7	9		2
1	3		8				6	4

Difficulty Level ★★ 3/22

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

6	5	9	4	1	2	3	8	7
3	7	4	6	5	8	1	9	2
1	8	2	3	7	9	4	5	6
7	1	6	8	9	5	2	4	3
8	9	3	2	4	6	7	1	5
4	2	5	7	3	1	9	6	8
5	3	7	1	8	4	6	2	9
2	4	8	9	6	7	5	3	1
9	6	1	5	2	3	8	7	4

Difficulty Level ★ 3/15

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

THE SKELETON COAST Solution: 5 letters

S	T	S	C	A	S	T	L	E	L	B	M	U	R	N
A	H	L	T	W	S	H	O	R	E	L	I	N	E	E
I	N	A	A	A	T	E	R	R	A	C	E	H	M	R
L	C	T	T	S	R	N	O	I	L	E	C	I	O	R
O	R	O	E	E	E	K	R	A	P	I	F	S	T	A
R	O	A	N	L	E	H	Y	A	L	R	A	S	E	B
S	S	F	N	I	O	H	C	A	I	F	L	N	S	I
E	S	R	B	G	C	P	C	A	A	A	O	A	T	N
N	B	I	D	A	O	I	E	R	E	D	R	G	E	I
O	O	C	T	K	G	L	I	S	I	B	Y	A	N	N
T	N	A	A	O	I	U	A	R	E	M	X	T	R	A
S	E	W	L	T	R	N	A	Z	S	S	S	E	A	C
M	S	O	S	O	D	R	H	I	M	B	A	O	G	S
E	E	O	C	C	I	N	A	C	L	O	V	O	N	O
G	H	K	U	N	E	N	E	L	E	P	H	A	N	T

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Africa, Agate, Angola, Antelopes, Arid, Barren, Beaches, Cape, Castle, Cheetahs, Clay, Crimson, Crossbones, Elephant, Fria, Garnets, Gemstone, Geological, Himba, Hostile, Iconic, Kunene, Lichen, Lion, Oases, Oryx, Park, Remote, Rock, Rumble, Safari, Sailors, Salt, Sand, Seals, Shoreline, Stark, Terrace, Torra, Toscanini, Ugab, Volcanic, Zebras, Swakop

Yesterday's Answer: Exposed

To purchase **THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volume 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45 or 46,** order online at www.WonderWordBooks.com. (Contains 43 puzzles.)

CLASSIFIED ADS

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Opening for Controller with Bridge Capital, LLC in Garapan, Saipan, CNMI. Minimum Requirements: Bachelor's Degree in Accounting or Finance (may be foreign equivalent) and 5 yrs. experience as Controller, Accountant and/or Auditor, or any suitable combination of education, training or experience. Provides Fiscal and Business Management advice and consultancy at the corporate level. Send CV to PMB 29, Box 10001, Saipan, MP 96950; email to jordan.sundell@bccnmi.com or fax to 670-322-2323. Verification of qualifications required.

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1 General Manager (Accounting): $1,000-1,800/mo. 5 years of managerial experience required. Must have majored in accounting. 10 years of accounting experience required. Korean writing and speaking fluency required. Email resume to hps@hanmisaipan.com.

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

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Tel: 670 322-3333

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5 years minimum work experience required in building maintenance including finishing carpentry, masonry, plumbing installation, tile laying, wood staining and varnishing, plastering, and other maintenance duties as assigned. Knowledgeable in basic building design, construction, and repair. Must have valid CNMI driver's license and transportation. Pay is minimum wage.

Interested applicants may contact 287-9684 or send resume, police clearance, and references to RJR Co. at rjrco@yahoo.com

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2 Cook (Korean cuisine): $6.05/hr. At least 2 years of professional cooking experience in Korean cuisine required. Email resume to wing@hanmisaipan.com.

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1 Butcher: $6.05/hr. High school diploma and at least 3 years experience required. Email resume to dolim@hanmisaipan.com.

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DBA: Twins Supermarket

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(2) Store Manager - $6.25/hr.
(1) General Manger - $6.75/hr.
(3) Stocker - $6.05/hr.
(2) Supervisor - $6.25/hr.

For interested applicants, please call 235-8989

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

PKM Corporation
DBA: Saipan Store II

(2) Supervisor - $6.25/hr.
(3) Cashier - $6.05/hr.
(3) Stocker - $6.05/hr.
(2) Manager - $6.50/hr.

For interested applicants, please call 233-0205

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT for MISA ENTERPRISES,INC.

General Maintenance (3): Duties may involve skills in electrical, plumbing, carpentry, masonry, painting, landscape or maintain grounds of property using hand or power tools or equipment. Can typically perform variety of task such as sod laying, mowing, trimming, planting, watering, fertilizing, digging, raking and installing , repairing buildings, floors or stairs.

Additional Requirements: Must have a valid CNMI driver's license and flexible in work hours. All applicants must be of good health and good moral character must be able to provide current police clearance, with reliable transportation and must agree to drug test.

Applicants of position listed above are required to have a minimum of 2-3 years of experience.

We are an equal opportunity employer. Qualified applicants will be considered.

Applications can be picked up at Kinpachi Restaurant MISA Bldg.1 in Coral Tree Avenue, Garapan. Please no phone calls.

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Must be familiar with heavy equipment such as dump trucks, concrete mixer trucks, loaders, excavators, graders, etc. There are also light duty trucks and vehicles in the fleet. Receive parts, stock shelves, inventory parts, provide order information to parts manager based on minimum inventory levels for parts, keep stockrooms and inventories organized. May help search catalogs for stock numbers and catalog numbers of parts. Maintain inventory and help track down rare parts for older machines and equipment. Prepare service kits for maintenance based on hour or mileage maintenance schedules.

Send Resume: David L. Bush, General Manager, Hawaiian Rock Products,
PMB 139, PPP P.O. Box 10000, Saipan, MP 96950; by facsimile (670) 288-0408;
or by e-mail to dbush@hawaiianrock.com

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Legislative Bureau

NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE
P.O. BOX 500586, SAIPAN, MP 96950

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Examination Announcement Number: LB-JVA-16-001
PL-UNGRADED: $777.26 B/W

Position: Assistant Sergeant at Arms
Opening Date: March 15, 2016
Closing Date: March 31, 2016

The salary will be determined by the qualification of the appointee
Location: Honorable Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building (CNMI Legislature), Capitol Hill, Saipan

General Duties:

- Responsible for the safety & security of members of the Legislature;
- Attends all session, public hearings and any other legislative meeting as designated by the Presiding Officer;
- Records and maintains the Chamber's legislative meetings as scheduled and maintains order and security during sessions and meetings;
- Delivers official documents, serves subpoenas, and performs other duties as instructed by the Presiding Officer, official rules, or other legislative authority;
- Prepares the chamber prior to scheduled legislative meetings and maintains its security during the interim;
- Inspects and operates the chamber's sound/video system and responsible for the maintenance of the chamber;
- Records and maintains visitor's log sheet on a daily basis; and
- Performs other duties as assigned.

Qualifications and Requirements:

- Must have completed a Law Enforcement Academy and undergo and complete yearly required certifications pursuant to CNMI law; and
- Must undergo a complete Psychological Evaluation;
- Have knowledge of rules, general procedures, customs and courtesies of the CNMI Legislature and general principles of law enforcement; procedures and techniques of maintaining order, security and protocol of a legislative body; and
- Maintains good working conduct and is willing to work regularly after normal working hours.

Education requirements may be substituted with related experience

Education and training claimed under item 19(A) through 19(F) of the Application for Employment must be substantiated by a copy of an official diploma and/or certificate. **Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. All applicants may be subject to further interviews and examinations(i.e. writing assignment) to determine qualification.**

Employment application may be accessed at www.cnmileg.gov.mp or may be picked up at the Office of the Director of the Legislative Bureau located at the Honorable Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building (CNMI Legislature), Capitol Hill, Saipan. Completed application and police clearance may be submitted to the Office of the Director or may be mailed, postmarked no later than the closing date to the Office of the Director; Legislative Bureau; P.O. Box 500586; Saipan, MP 96950. No telephone inquiries.

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All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

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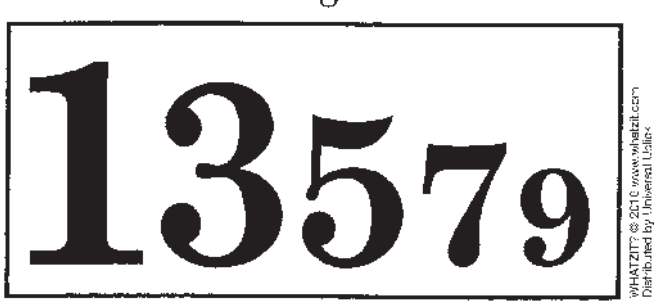

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Find today's solution in classified section

Texas A&M downs N Iowa, reaches Sweet 16

AP
Texas A&M guard Alex Caruso, left, and guard Danuel House (23) celebrate as Northern Iowa players walk off the court after defeating the Panthers in double overtime of a second-round men's college basketball game in the NCAA Tournament Sunday, March 20, 2016, in Oklahoma City. Texas A&M, won 92-88.

NEW YORK (AP)—Upset in the NCAA Tournament the last couple of years, No. 2 seed Villanova and its seniors made it to the Sweet 16 for the first time since 2009 and won't have to listen to talk of not making it to the second weekend.

Syracuse also silenced some doubters, and became one of a half-dozen ACC teams to make it to the round of 16.

But the best came in the night contests. Texas A&M roared back from 10 points down in the last 30 seconds to force overtime and won it over Northern Iowa in a second extra period, 92-88.

Alex Caruso scored 25 points as Texas A&M advanced to the Sweet 16 for the third time in school history, the first since 2007.

Danuel House scored all 22 of his points in the second half and overtime, while Jalen Jones finished with 16 for Texas A&M—which has now won 10 of its last 11 games.

Jeremy Morgan had career highs of 36 points and 12 rebounds to lead the Panthers (23-13), who led 69-59 in the final minute of regulation before committing four turnovers in the final 29 seconds to spark the Aggies comeback.

Notre Dame 76, Stephen Austin 75

Rex Plfueger tapped in a miss with 1.5 seconds left and Notre Dame survived a valiant effort by Stephen F. Austin to reach the Sweet 16 for the second consecutive season.

With 17.5 seconds left, Notre Dame grabbed an SFA rebound down one and put it in the hands of Demetrius Jackson. The point guard drove to the basket and missed. Zach Auguste followed for the Irish (22-12) but could not convert. The ball slipped off the rim and with one hand Pflueger flipped it in for his only basket of the game.

A long heave from Stephen F. Austin (28-6) went wide and Notre Dame celebrated by swarming Pflueger.

The Irish advance to play Wisconsin Friday.

Wisconsin 66, Xavier 63

Bronson Koenig hit two 3-pointers in the closing seconds, the last of them as the buzzer sounded, and Wisconsin edged Xavier.

The talented sharpshooter who failed to hit from beyond the arc in a first-round win over Pittsburgh connected from well beyond the 3-point line to tie it at 63 with 11.7 seconds remaining.

Edmond Sumner brought the ball up court for Xavier (28-6), and then drove to the basket, running over the Badgers' Zak Showalter and getting called for an offensive foul with 4.3 seconds to go.

Villanova 87, Iowa 68

Josh Hart scored 19 points and second-seeded Villanova advanced to the Sweet 16 for the first time since 2009 with a rout of Iowa.

Villanova's senior class, led by Ryan Arcidiacono and Daniel Ochefu, made it to the tournament's second weekend for the first time. They were upset in the round of 32 the last two seasons and didn't make it that far as freshmen.

The Wildcats (31-5) will meet third-seeded Miami on Thursday in Louisville, Kentucky.

Maryland 73, Hawaii 60

Melo Trimble scored 24 points and grabbed eight rebounds as Maryland beat Hawaii.

Diamond Stone added 14 points for Maryland (27-8), which advanced to the round of 16 for the eighth time in the past 22 years.

Mike Thomas had 19 points and 11 rebounds for Hawaii (28-6), which won a tournament game for the first time this season.

Maryland will play Kansas next Thursday.

Syracuse 75, Middle Tennessee State 50

The insufferable zone of Syracuse ground Middle Tennessee State's magical March ride to a halt, and the Orange beat the Blue Raiders.

Michael Gbinije poured in 23 points, Tyler Lydon added 14 and the Orange (21-13) used a 21-2 charge midway through the second half to crack open a close game and join five other ACC schools in advancing to the third round of the NCAA Tournament.

After teetering on the bubble a week ago, they'll play No. 11 seed Gonzaga on Friday in Chicago.

The Blue Raiders (25-10), who shredded so many brackets with their upset of second-seeded Michigan State, made things tough on Syracuse for a while. They led early in the second half and still trailed just 40-39 with 16:02 to go, but proceeded to make one of their next 16 field-goal attempts.

Oklahoma 85, VCU 81

Buddy Hield scored 19 of his 36 points in the final eight minutes to help Oklahoma hold off VCU.

Hield, who didn't score for more than 10 minutes to start the game, made 9 of 12 shots in the second half after going 2 for 8 in the first. The senior guard posted at least 30 points for the 11th time this season.

Jordan Woodard scored 17 points and Isaiah Cousins added 15 for the Sooners (27-7), who advanced to the Sweet 16 for the second straight year. They will play either Northern Illinois or Texas A&M.

Oregon 69, Saint Joseph's 64

Dillon Brooks scored 25 points to leading Oregon over Saint Joseph's in the second round of the West Regional.

Oregon (29-6) was carrying the banner for the rest of the Pac-12 after the conference posted a collective dud on the opening weekend. Five teams were sent home in the first round and Utah was routed by 11th-seeded Gonzaga in the round of 32, leaving the Ducks as the lone conference representative.

And they were tested by the Hawks, rallying from down 58-51 in the final five minutes to advance to the Sweet 16 for the first time since 2013. Brooks started the rally with a driving three-point play and put Oregon in front for good on a 3-pointer with 1:19 remaining.

DeAndre' Bembry led the Hawks (28-8) with 16 points.

Nowitzki, Williams lead Mavs past Trail Blazers in OT

DALLAS (AP)—Dirk Nowitzki scored 40 points and Deron Williams had 31 points and 16 assists, leading the Dallas Mavericks to a 132-120 overtime win over the Portland Trail Blazers on Sunday.

Nowitzki and Williams capped season-high scoring efforts with the first 11 points in overtime. Williams made a tie-breaking 3-pointer before Nowitzki scored eight straight points.

The Mavericks' victory moved them within a half-game of the Trail Blazers for the sixth playoff position in the Western Conference. Dallas has 12 games to play, and Portland 11.

The Mavericks (35-35) also gained a tiebreaker by winning the first two of three games in the season series against the Trail Blazers (36-35). The teams play again in Portland on Wednesday.

Damian Lillard led the Trail Blazers with 26 points. Allen Crabbe scored 24 points, and C.J. McCollum had 22. Miles Plumlee had 14 points and 19 rebounds.

Raptors 105, Magic 100

In Toronto, DeMar DeRozan scored 25 points, leading Toronto to the win.

Luis Scola had 20 points as the Raptors moved within one game of idle Cleveland for the top spot in the Eastern Conference.

Evan Fournier and Victor Oladipo each had 21 points for Orlando, which lost its seventh straight game in Toronto and has now lost 13 of the last 14 meetings with the Raptors.

A 3-pointer from Fournier with 1:11 remaining trimmed Toronto's lead to 97-96, but DeRozan responded with a floating jumper with 53.9 seconds left and added the free throw after being fouled by Ersan Ilyasova.

Pelicans 109, Clippers 105

In New Orleans, Jrue Holiday scored 22 points, helping the injury-riddled Pelicans to the victory.

Omer Asik scored a season-high 15 points and tied his season best with 14 rebounds for New Orleans, while Dante Cunningham scored a season-high 19 points. Reserve guard Tim Frazier added a season-high 17 points.

Chris Paul and J.J. Redick each scored 24 points, and Paul also had 13 assists for the Clippers, who lost in Memphis on Saturday night and were playing their second game in less than 24 hours. Los Angeles missed 19 3-point attempts and 13 free throws.

Kings 88, Knicks 80

In New York, DeMarcus Cousins had 24 points and 20 rebounds, and Sacramento had its best defensive performance of the season.

The Kings, who came in allowing a league-worst 109.6 points per game, easily surpassed their previous best of 88 points allowed, shutting down a Knicks team that played without leading scorer Carmelo Anthony.

Cousins emerged the winner in a good big-man duel with Robin Lopez, who finished with 23 points and 20 rebounds for the Knicks, playing through his usual frustrations with the officiating and even a security guard in this one.

Jazz 94, Bucks 85

In Milwaukee, Gordon Hayward scored 18 points, including 13 during a decisive third quarter, and the Jazz won for the fifth time in six games.

Utah remained one game behind Dallas for the eighth and final playoff spot in the Western Conference.

Trey Lyles added 14 points for the Jazz, and Shelvin Mack had 13 points and 12 assists. Rudy Gobert finished with 12 points and 14 rebounds.

Milwaukee is 4-18 in its last 22 games against Utah. Jabari Parker had 19 points and eight rebounds for the Bucks.

Celtics 120, Sixers 105

In Philadelphia, Isaiah Thomas led six Celtics players in double figures with 26 points, and Boston snapped a four-game skid.

Jared Sullinger added 17 points and 13 rebounds for Boston, which swept the four-game season series against the 76ers to make it eight consecutive wins against Philadelphia.

Day's wild ride ends with a Bay Hill victory

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—Jason Day turned his fortunes at just the right time Sunday by making a 12-foot birdie putt and then saving par from just under 100 feet away in a bunker to win the Arnold Palmer Invitational.

It was another great moment for Palmer, the 86-year-old tournament host who watched it unfold on the 18th green.

Day closed with a 2-under 70 for a one-shot victory over Kevin Chappell, who looked as if he might finally win in his 150th start on the PGA Tour. Chappell didn't flinch the entire back nine until his tee shot was buried in deep rough on the 18th, forcing him to lay up. He hit wedge to 25 feet and was ready to putt when he heard the big roar when Day made birdie on the 17th to tie for the lead.

"Being honest, kind of had me rattled a little bit," Chappell said. He left his par putt well short and made bogey for a 69.

The closing hole at Bay Hill was just as tough for Day.

With a one-shot lead after Chappell made bogey, Day took water out of play from the right rough and went well left of the green into a bunker, 95 feet away with water on the other side of the green. Day blasted out to 4 feet and made the par for his first victory of the year.

He moves to No. 2 in the world and will have a chance to overtake Jordan Spieth next week in the Dell Match Play.

"It means the world," Day said of winning Palmer's tournament. "I just ground it out. I got it done when I wasn't quite on."

Four players had at least a share of the lead on the back nine. Day was the last man standing.

Troy Merritt, four shots behind when he made the turn, ran off five straight birdies to catch the leaders, and then chipped in for par on the 17th to keep his hopes alive. But his approach on the 18th went into the water and he made double bogey for a 71.

Merritt tied for third with Henrik Stenson, who was tied for the lead until failing to save par on the 14th and then finding the water for bogey on the 16th. He also shot 71.

Day finished at 17-under 271.

Chappell was sick all week after catching a bug from his young son. He took the lead with a two-putt birdie on the par-5 16th, hit a tough bunker shot close on the 17th to save par. The shot that cost him was his tee shot, and the lie was so atrocious that the only question was where to lay up.

"I had a chance to win, and that's all I can ask for," Chappell said after his fourth runner-up finish on the PGA Tour, and second this season.

Rory McIlroy ended a wild week with his sixth double bogey—the most he has ever made in a PGA Tour event—along with two eagles and five birdies for a 65. He shot a 67 on Friday to make the cut. It was the 75s in the other two rounds that held him back.

"Pretty much every week there's a lot of good golf in there, which you've seen on Friday and today," he said. "I'm just making a lot of mistakes."

Adam Scott, coming off two straight PGA Tour victories, played the 18th hole in 5 over on the weekend. He made double bogey on Sunday and still shot 69.

The four-man sprint required some help from Day early, and an improbable birdie run by Merritt after he made the turn.

Day twice made bogey on the par 5s—a poor chip on No. 4 and a shot into the water on No. 6—and went from a two-shot lead to a two-shot deficit. But he got right back into the mix with a towering shot out of the rough on No. 9 at a pin guarded by a bunker, so high that it landed softly on the green and rolled to a foot for a tap-in birdie.

Merritt chopped his way to a double bogey on No. 9 to fall four shots behind, seemingly out of the mix until he began the back nine with four straight birdie putts, and then holing out from the bunker from 40 feet on No. 14 for his fifth straight birdie to share the lead.

Stenson was the only one who didn't have a chance on the 18th.

Day said he received a text from eight-time Bay Hill winner Tiger Woods on Sunday morning. He has talked about how much he turns to Woods for advice on such things as protecting a 54-hole lead. And then he delivered a clutch moment to win.

"It's obviously those things—one of many—why he's been the No. 1 player in the world, and why I'm the 150th player in the world," Chappell said. "You just can't bogey the last when you're in contention, and hats off to Jason. He played well, real clutch down the stretch. And I'll learn from this and get better."

AP

Arnold Palmer, left, presents the championship trophy to Jason Day, of Australia, after Day won the Arnold Palmer Invitational golf tournament in Orlando, Fla., Sunday, March 20, 2016.

NFL owners to consider 'yellow card rule' on ejections

BOCA RATON, Fla. (AP)—Roger Goodell wasn't kidding.

The NFL commissioner suggested during Super Bowl week that the league would look at ejecting players after two serious personal fouls in a game. This week at the owners' meetings, a proposal from the powerful competition committee for what would amount to a "yellow card rule" will be discussed and possibly voted on.

Goodell was not specific about what sort of penalties could lead to ejection. The committee—comprised of owners, coaches, general managers and league personnel, and with input from officials and players—is suggesting two unsportsmanlike conduct penalties would result in expulsion.

The committee broke down those fouls to throwing a punch or forearm or kicking an opponent, even if no contact is made; using abusive, threatening or insulting language or gestures to an opponent, teammates, officials or representatives of the league; or using baiting or taunting acts or words that engender ill will between teams.

Atlanta Falcons President Rich McKay, co-chairman of the committee, said there was much discussion of including such personal fouls as late hits, egregious face-mask penalties, and roughing the passer as potential incidents leading to ejection.

McKay and Troy Vincent, the NFL's football operations chief, noted that unsportsmanlike conduct penalties rose from an average of 50 over several years to 75 in 2015.

"We definitely talked about both," McKay said, "and we feel like we have disciplinary ways to deal with the personal foul side. Obviously, we have a system of fining; we have the ability to suspend. ... To us, on the sportsmanship side, that's what led us to this rule. We did talk about the personal foul side. There is that concern that's raised on the degree of fouls, if you will."

Such as having two incidental face-mask calls, which are 15-yard penalties, getting a player kicked out.

McKay noted that only twice in a game last season did the same player draw more than one unsportsmanlike conduct flag. One of those is the much-discussed battle between Giants receiver Odell Beckham Jr. and Panthers All-Pro cornerback Josh Norman on Dec. 20. Beckham got three such penalties, but he was not ejected.

Both Vincent and McKay stressed that game officials have the power to expel players for any outrageous fouls.

"We will certainly emphasize the fact that in flagrant foul situations, the referee is empowered to have an immediate ejection for one foul," McKay said. "He doesn't need to wait for that second foul, and we will definitely make that a point to the officials that if they see that act and they believe it to be flagrant, they are empowered to eject that player from the game."

At one point, Beckham launched himself into Norman after the whistle had blown. He was flagged, but might a similar act bring an ejection in 2016 if the competition committee's proposal passes?

"I think if the whistle is blown and it's a dead ball, then you're going to end up with an unsportsmanlike conduct foul," McKay said. "Again, the official, if in his judgment sees it as flagrant, is empowered at that point to eject."

The rule would be similar to soccer, in which a player who receives two yellow cards—a caution for certain types of fouls—is automatically ejected.

Other areas of on-field play the league is hoping to clean up include hits with the crown of the helmet; low hits on the passer; the quarterback slide; rushing tactics on field goals and extra point kicks; coaches going on the field; and pre-snap movement.

The committee also is asking for a total removal of the chop block—basically when a defender is engaged with a blocker and another blocker hits him low—from the game.

"There have been numerous changes to this rule, such that we found this rule to be really confusing," McKay said, "and the officials in their comments on rule enforcement, when asked what rule gives you the most pause in enforcing, this always ends up at the top. We don't get a lot of injuries per year, but we think the position that the players are in just doesn't appear to be fair, that he's subject to that low block when he's fully engaged with an offensive player. So we think it's time to change the rule."

Meanwhile, the Seattle Seahawks have agreed to terms on a new contract with veteran linebacker and special teams standout Mike Morgan.

Seattle announced the deal with Morgan on Saturday. The unrestricted free agent had made visits to a few other teams before deciding to return to the Seahawks.

Morgan first joined Seattle as an undrafted free agent in 2011. While his playing time on defense has been limited to spot duty, he has become a vital part of Seattle's special teams.

Rashford gives United 1-0 win over City in Manchester derby

MANCHESTER, England (AP)—Marcus Rashford is proving the man for the big occasion for Manchester United.

Plucked from the youth team to answer an injury crisis last month, the 18-year-old striker took his tally of goals to five by scoring in a 1-0 win over Manchester City in the Premier League on Sunday that intensified the race for Champions League qualification.

Having scored two goals in each of the important games against FC Midtjylland in the Europa League and Arsenal in the Premier League, Rashford marked his first appearance in a Manchester derby by sprinting past the hapless Martin Demichelis and sidefooting home in the 16th minute.

Rashford's pace and exuberance was too much for the 35-year-old Demichelis, who was substituted in the 53rd minute on a day he and City will want to forget. City, with just one win from its last six games, stayed in fourth place but is now only one point clear of both United and West Ham with eight games left.

"Rashford is very quick and Demichelis looked like the years are catching up with him," United manager Louis van Gaal said of a defender he used to coach at Bayern Munich.

It was a huge result for United, with Van Gaal having billed the game "do or die" for his side's top-four chances following its elimination from the Europa League on Thursday. Amid all the speculation over his future, Van Gaal could still win the FA Cup and guide United back into the Champions League in the final two months of the season.

"Now it is in our hands," Van Gaal said.

AP

Manchester City's Eliaquim Mangala, left, and United's Jesse Lingard challenge for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester City and Manchester United at the Etihad stadium in Manchester, Sunday, March 20, 2016.

Meanwhile, if City's current form is anything to go by, incoming manager Pep Guardiola will be taking over a Europa League team next season. City's only victory in the last six league games was against last-place Aston Villa, and the team has failed to score in four of its last five matches.

The days when City had the most fearsome attacking unit in English football are long gone. Manuel Pellegrini's team had 26 shots against United but rarely troubled goalkeeper David de Gea.

"I am not unhappy with the performance of the team," Pellegrini said. "I don't think we deserved to lose."

Pellegrini said Guardiola's imminent arrival at City hasn't affected the team and loosened his authority, even though recent results suggested they have.

"I don't think I lose any control," Pellegrini said. "The attitude of the team today reflects they are all involved."

City lost winger Raheem Sterling (groin) and goalkeeper Joe Hart (calf) to injuries, the latter caused by one of many errors by Demichelis, who was liability in defense.

United's goal came against the run of play, after Rashford finally got one-on-one with Demichelis. There was only one winner as the youngster skipped by the man almost twice his age, and slotted under the body of the diving Hart to become the youngest scorer in a Manchester derby in the Premier League era.

The first half ended in feisty fashion with players pushing and squaring off after Rashford fell under the reckless challenge of Demichelis, who somehow got away with the foul.

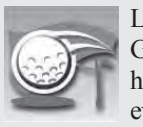
Demichelis came out for the second half but blotted his performance even further by leaving Hart short with a dreadful back pass, with the goalkeeper hurting his calf as he hastily cleared ahead of the inrushing Anthony Martial. Hart was carried off on a stretcher and Demichelis was put out of his misery moments later when he was taken off for City's third substitute, Wilfried Bony.

"I think he was nervous," Pellegrini said of Demichelis.

The closest City came to scoring in its strong finish was when Aguero headed a cross from Yaya Toure against the post.

Pellegrini predicted Hart and Sterling could be out for 3-4 weeks, ahead of upcoming tests.

Spring events at Laolao golf



Laolao Bay Golf & Resort has lined up two events for its spring season this year. Sessions for its Junior Golf Program is now on its second week, while the Easter Fun Day will be held this Saturday.

The new season of its Jungolf program started last March 15 and ends on June 2. Sessions are held every Tuesday and Thursday from 5pm to 6:30pm at the driving range of the Kagman golf facility.

The program is open to boys and girls in the 7 to 16 age group. The monthly fee is $80 for eight sessions and is due upon registration, while the $20 per session is for walk-ins with free pool pass.

Parents or guardians are welcome to join the program with the same fees. Harry Nakamura, Jack San Nicolas, Franco Santos, and Tony Satur are the instructors.

This Saturday, Laolao will be hosting the Easter Fun Day from 3pm to 7pm also at the driving range.

Fun and other games are in store for all the participants. A tractor hayride, egg coloring station, and an Easter Egg Hunt are some of the activities lined up for the day.

Refreshments are available for purchase and participants must bring their own Easter egg hunt basket.

For more information, about the Jungolf program, call 236-8888 or email rsrvn@laolaobaygolf.com. For the Easter fun day, call 236-8888 or 236-8820. ***(Jon Perez)***

COMETS

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from Jimmy Demapan, who reached off a passed ball.

The Comets went on to gain more cushion at the top of the sixth inning after bagging three additional runs—all came from RBI walks that brought Lorenzo Sebu, Demapan, and N-Nes Snech home.

At the bottom the sixth, the Falcons had chances to cut the deficit, but were denied, as the Comets had a double play at first and second to end the inning. The Falcons were called for a 1-3 putout play earlier for the first out.

A 1-2-3 inning at the top of the seventh gave the Falcons another opportunity to mount a late comeback. However, the Comets countered with their own defensive stops to spoil the Falcons anew.

Sebu closed out for the Comets, relieving Babauta in the sixth and allowing a walk to Falcons leadoff batter Kimo Angailen in the seventh. Next at bat for the Falcons was Ace Evangelista, who flied out to leftfield, while Skerei was struck out, and Henry Aguon advanced to first on a hit by pitch.

With two outs and Aguon eventually moving to second and Angailen reaching third, the Falcons badly needed a good hit from Jester Kintaro. However, Sebu frustrated the leftfielder with a strikeout to wrap up the match.

JUNIOR LEAGUE
Enforcers 11, Red Sox 8

The Kagman Enforcers closed out strong to beat the Red Sox for the third time this season.

The Enforcers collected seven runs in the last three innings to turn a deadlock after four innings (4-4) to a 3-run win.

Ignacio Mendiola led the win, as he went 2-for-2 in the homestretch and recorded three RBIs. He blasted a two-run triple at the top of the fifth and also reached home of a passed ball to lift the Enforcers to a 7-4 advantage. The Red Sox equalized at the bottom behind Jared Reyes' RBI single and two runs off the Enforcers' defensive lapses.

Mendiola was still on target at the top of the sixth, unloading an RBI single to bring the lead back to the Enforcers, 9-7. The Enforcers' other run was courtesy of Cabrera, who scored off a passed ball. The Enforcers also got two runs at the top of the last inning from the Red Sox's miscues for an 11-7 advantage.

An RBI single from Jared Reyes trimmed the lead to 3, but that was it for the Red Sox, as Chris Achas earned two straight strikeouts and a few minutes later shortstop Pedro Maratita caught a fly for the last out.

BIG LEAGUE
Islanders 8, Comets 6

The Islanders foiled the Comets' bid for a sweep last Saturday after pulling off a close win.

Nate Camacho made things happen for the Islanders at the bottom of the last inning, as he struck out Larry Sebaklim for the final out. Camacho also got an earlier strikeout in the last inning for the second out, while the first out came off a 6-3 play against Comets leadoff batter Jesse Kalen.

After the early out, the Comets threatened the Islanders as Franko Nakamura made an RBI single and the former posted their second run in the inning off their foes' error.

AKIMARU

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gel Marie Tan, Tiffany Lin, Osisang Chilton, Billy Brown, Vener Urena, Joshua Berger, and Carol Lynn Pierce.

Tammy was the first female to complete the race after clocking in at 37:53. The Tsunami Saipan swimmer won the girls 13 to 14 age group, downing SSC's Jinju Thompson (39:33). Tan of SSC was the second women's finisher and first in the 15 to 19 division after clocking in at 37:59. She placed ahead of Palau's Dirngulbai Misech (38:08) and Roylin Akiwo (40:12) and Tsunami Saipan's Angel De Jesus (39:09).

Brown, who is the coach of the Palau team, took the top honors in the men's 30 to 39 age group after submitting 39:36 and prevailing against Saipan's Nap Dizon (55:09). Urena registered 42:15 to win the 40 to 49 division against Ricky Castro (58:23) and Ernie Moises (1:00:16), while Chilton (38:26), Lin (58:40), Carol Lyn (48:39), and Berger (58:14), raced unopposed in the 20 to 29, 30 to 39, 50 to 59, and over 60 age groups, respectively.

T8

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Sonics set the tone of the match early, posting a 15-3 lead after the first 10 minutes of play. Jester Kintaro outgunned the entire Kanaka Black crew with his 6 points to give the Sonics a double-digit spread.

The Sonics then widened the gap further in the second quarter, 29-5, as they had five different players contributing on offense, while Kanaka Black got only 2 markers from Kenneth Kaipat.

Kanaka Black continued to struggle in the second half and with their inexperience and lack of potent offense, the Sonics walked away with the lopsided win.

Kintaro top-scored for the Sonics with his 13 markers, while Kristian Itaas and Rafael Ordono combined for 17.

In the first game, Wong pulled off 44-40 overtime victory against NMI Rollers.

JC Ferrari and Greg Deleon Guerrero teamed up in helping Wong edge NMI Rollers in the extra period. Ferrari made Wong's last two field goals in the extension, while Deleon Guerrero canned a pair of important free throws. E.J. Abeja and Sean Apasan tallied the 4 other points for Wong in overtime.

Only Angelo Factor and Joseph Kisa lit up the board for NMI Rollers in the extra five minutes of the close match. Factor also registered 6 straight points in regulation to send the game in overtime.

Deleon Guerrero ended up leading all scorers with his 17 markers, while Abeja finished in double figures, too with 11. Factor had 11 to pace NMI Rollers.

37th Annual Saipan Ocean Swim

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Saipan Swim Club head coach Jacoby Winkfield explains the course to U8 swimmers before the start of the race in last Saturday's 37th Annual Saipan Ocean Swim held in the waters near Naked Fish.

Dominic Zedde smiles as he nears completion of the 1.3-kilometer swim.

Aasish Dangol runs out of the water.

Kengo Sato takes his time getting out of the water.

Race volunteer Gary De Guzman directs Jinie Thompson to the finish line.

Swimmers head to the course.

Taiyo Akimaru, right, tries to catch up with Ashley Dangol.

Cojiro Kaga gets out of the water.

Texas A&M downs N Iowa, reaches Sweet 16

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Sports

Day's wild ride ends with a Bay Hill victory

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Comets end skid against Falcons

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The Comets scored their first win against the Falcons, 6-2, in the Senior League game in the 2016 Saipan Little League Baseball last Saturday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

The Comets' defense forced the Falcons to reach home plate only two times in the complete seven-inning match and allowed the former to end their two-game losing skid against the latter. The Falcons prevailed in their first meeting, 4-0, last Feb. 28 and followed it up with a 6-4 triumph in the second outing last March 6. Their final showdown in the four-round robin regular season will be on April 3.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
The Comets' Ethan Babauta delivers a pitch during their Senior League game against the Falcons in the SLBB last Saturday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

The Falcons' runs came from Neldreyton Skerei's RBI triple at the bottom of the third and sacrifice out in the fifth. The Comets also got one run in the third inning off an RBI single from starting pitcher Ethan Babauta, who hit another RBI single in the fifth to lift his squad to a 3-2 advantage. The Comets drew their third run at the top of the fifth

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T8 Warriors, Sonics crush Kanaka teams

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The Sonics and T8 Warriors pounced on Kanaka squads as action in the U15 division of the Inaugural Frank M. Diaz Memorial Youth League resumed last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

T8 Warriors whipped Kanaka Blue, 46-26, in the third and final game last weekend, while the Sonics romped past Kanaka Black in the second match, 51-12.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
T8 Warriors' Trion Sulap is fouled by a Kanaka Blue defender on his way to a fastbreak layup during the first quarter of their U15 game in the Diaz caging last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The Warriors found their targets in the second half for the easy win. The final half started with the Warriors ahead by only 7, 17-10, before Joel Norita made it a 31-20 advantage, after dropping all his 8 points in the third period.

Kobe Lifoifoi then picked up where Norita left off in the fourth canto, scoring 6 points, while Henry Aguon added 4 and two other Warriors players hit the board in the final frame en route to a 20-point winning margin.

Lifoifoi paced the Warriors with his 12 points, while Aguon chipped in 10.

In the second game, the

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Akimaru sets new PBT, tops 2.5K race

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Saipan Swim Club's Kento Akimaru completed the 2.5-kilometer course in last Sunday's 37th Annual Saipan Ocean Swim with the fastest time.

The 15-year-old swimmer finished the two-lap race in 33:51 to emerge as the top finisher among the 26 individuals who conquered the longest course in the event held in the waters near Naked Fish. Akimaru's time in last weekend's race was better than his 2014 record (35:18).

The SSC member won a close battle against Palau's Noel Keane, who reached the finish line at the 34:02 mark. Akimaru also defeated five other swimmers in the boys 15 to 19 age groups, while Keane topped the 13 to 14 division. The Marianas High School student prevailed against Tsunami Saipan's Takumi Sugie (34:55), fellow SSC teammates Christian Villacrusis (35:06) and David Boyer (38:52), Von Adrian Labayan (38:39) and Palau's Keemo Kanai (45:02). Keane, on the other hand, beat SSC's Taiga Sato (35:23) and R.J. Pierce (39:29), Tsunami Saipan's Mark Maestro (35:27), and compatriot Malcolm Shae Gaymann (38:08).

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Saipan Swim Club's Kento Akimaru runs out of the water during the 2.5K race in last Sunday's 37th Annual Saipan Ocean Swim.

Meanwhile, other top age group finishers in the 2.5K event were Miku Tammy, An-

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